

Of Mice and Men Essay Prompts

Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Select one of the following prompts and write a 4-5 page paper. Write down the due dates for the follow parts of your paper.

Thesis Due	10 pts	_____
Outline Due	20 pts	_____
Intro Paragraph Due	10 pts	_____
Rough Draft Due (2 copies)	20 pts	_____
Peer Editing Workshop	20 pts	_____

Final Essay Hard Copy + Website Upload 100 pts _____

Paper Requirements:

- 4-5 pages double-spaced typed
- 12 point font (Times New Roman or Arial Fonts)
- 1 inch margins all sides
- Header in upper right hand corner: Name, Date, Period
- Title of the Paper Centered below the header
- No more that 1 double space between the title of the paper and opening paragraph
- Essay rubric is attached with your name on it

Sound Literary Analysis Prompts for Any Writer

1. Characters in literature make decisions that have consequences for themselves and others. From a work of literature you have read in or out of school, select one character that made a decision. In a well-developed essay, explain the decision that the character made and explain the consequences of that decision.
2. In many works of literature, one character has a significant effect on other characters. The effect may be good or bad, or it may be both. Identify a work of literature that you have read in or out of class in which a main character significantly affects other characters. In an essay, describe the effects and explain why they are positive, negative, or both.
3. Many works of literature deal with close relationships. From a work of literature you have read in or out of school, select one close relationship. In a well-developed essay, identify the characters involved in the relationship and explain how the relationship affects each of the characters.
4. Often in a work of literature, a character is misunderstood by other characters. From a work of literature you have read in or out of school, select a character that is misunderstood. In a well-developed composition, explain why the character is misunderstood and why this misunderstanding is important to the work of literature.

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5. In literature as in life, courage is important. From a work of literature you have read in or out of school, select a character that is courageous. In a well- developed composition, identify that character and explain how that character's courage is important to the work of literature.
6. In literature, characters often demonstrate responsibility or a lack of responsibility. From a work of literature you have read in or out of school, select a character that demonstrates responsibility or a lack of responsibility. In a well-developed essay, identify the character, show how the character demonstrates responsibility or a lack of responsibility, and explain how the character's behavior affects the work of literature.
7. In literature as in life, people struggle with principles or beliefs they hold. From a work of literature you have read in or out of school, select a character that struggles with his or her own principles or beliefs. In a well-developed composition, identify that character and explain how that character's inner struggle is important to the work of literature.
8. Works of literature often feature characters that question the values of the societies in which they live. From a work of literature you have read in or out of school, select a character that questions the values of the society in which he or she lives. In a well-developed composition, identify the character, describe what the character questions about society, and explain why the character's questioning is important to the meaning of the work of literature.
9. Works of literature often feature characters with the ability to inspire or lead others. From a work of literature you have read in or out of school, select a character with the ability to inspire or lead others. In a well-developed composition, identify the character, describe how the character inspires or leads others, and why this character's ability is significant to the meaning of the work of literature.
10. Honor can have different meanings for different people. Literature is full of characters that can be considered honorable. From a work of literature you have read in or out of school, select a character that is honorable. In a well-developed composition identify the character, describe what makes the character honorable, and explain why the character's honor is important to the work of literature.

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1. Name _____ Date _____ Period _____
Criteria for Evaluation

Introduction	_____/25 pts
Hook	
The hook is a quote, a short story/scenario, or an insightful theme statement that peaks the reader's curiosity. The hook is not a question.	
The meaning of the hook is clearly and effectively explained or defined. Relevant examples are part of the explanation.	
Bridge	
The introduction shows how the hook relates to the prompt and the novel.	
The full name of the author and proper title of the novel/story are clearly stated.	
Thesis	
The thesis addresses the prompt.	
The thesis shows a persuasive opinion beyond an obvious, superficial insight.	
The thesis does not exceed two sentences.	
The thesis is free of "to be" and "to have" verbs.	
The thesis sets up an explicit structure for the rest of the essay.	

Organization within the Paper	_____/20 pts
The sequencing of paragraphs within the paper follows the sequencing of ideas in the thesis.	
Transitions	
Transitional sentences smoothly connect each paragraph to another with no lapses or organizational errors.	
Conclusion	
The conclusion provides the paper with a sense of completion.	
The conclusion restates important ideas from the argument without introducing new thoughts. NOTE: Restating the thesis does not mean rewriting the thesis into the end of the paper.	

Paragraph	_____/25 pts
Basic Construction	
Paragraphs have proper construction: topic sentences, transitions, lead-ins, more than one piece of evidence, analysis, and a concluding sentence. Nothing is out of place in a way that confuses the reader.	
Topic Sentences	
Topic sentences connect to a main idea in the thesis in the correct order of ideas.	
Topic sentences show a clear persuasive opinion, not a mere fact or observation.	
Topic sentences are free of "to be" and "to have" verbs.	
Transitions inside Paragraphs	

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Transitional phrases and sentences effectively help the reader move through and understand the paragraph.	
Lead-ins	
Lead-ins set the stage for the evidence. This means each lead-in communicates the context/situation, the speaker, and shows attribution verbs such as “says” or “states.”	
Lead-ins smoothly transition the reader into a direct quote or partial quote.	
Evidence	
Evidence supports the topic sentence and is a compelling match for the subject of the paragraph.	
Evidence is accurately quoted and cited.	
Analysis/Commentary	
The paragraphs contain enough effective commentary to show how the evidence supports the prompt.	
The analysis shows a new insight beyond an obvious, superficial observation.	
The analysis neither repeats nor summarizes the evidence.	

Deep Critical Thinking	/30 pts
The analysis of textual evidence demonstrates meaningful insight while exploring reasons behind surface-level ideas. For example, the analysis shows an explicit examination of tone and literal/figurative figures of speech such as connotation, denotation, imagery, symbolism.	
The analysis shows 1-2 meaningful text-to-text, text-to-self, and/or text-to-society connections at appropriate points in the essay. The comparisons and connections are logical, meaningful, and balanced.	
The essay clearly addresses a theme that is important to the novel/story, and it is well-stated in sentence form. The essay show how the theme connects to the work and society.	
The overall essay answers the prompt critically and reveals an in-depth understanding of the text. Ideas and arguments presented are balanced.	

Style and Mechanics WARNING: Up to 10 percent will be deducted from the essay score for papers that do not meet these minimum requirements.	_____ % is lost for the following errors...
The essay shows word choices that are appropriate and engaging to the audience. This includes a powerful, varied, vocabulary; vivid verbs, and variety of complex sentence structures.	OK Insufficient
The essay is written in the literary present-tense since the opinion in the paper is the most recent opinion to date.	OK Insufficient
The essay avoids shift in voice errors. No personal pronouns are used such as “I” “me” “you” “we” “us.”	OK Insufficient
Virtually no spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors stop the reader from understanding the argument in the essay.	OK Insufficient

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• Correct MLA citations are used in the documentation of evidence.	OK Insufficient
• The essay follows standard formatting guidelines: 4-5 pages; 12 point font, typed-double space; 1 inch margins all sides; title centered on top of first page below the proper header in the upper right hand corner of the first page.	OK Insufficient

Suggestions for Improvement: