

### **Essay Outlines & The Claim, Evidence, Warrant Model**

The following is an outline for what an essay of literary analysis does. Please use this outline in organizing your essays in class.

- 1) Introduction Paragraph: where you first tell what the thesis is.
  - a) Some mention of the title of the work, the author's name, and the genre (drama, novel, poem, etc.) This is often called a T-A-G sentence. When you hand-write an essay in class, underline the title of a novel or play (this indicates it would be italicized in print on a typed essay), and put the title of a poem or short story in quotation marks.
  - b) A basic summary or "overview" of the work. This is a concise 2-3 sentence description of the work's setting (place and time), storyline, central conflict, main characters, etc. NB: use literary present tense throughout the essay when referring to plot events.
  - c) A specific statement of your thesis or topic. This must be an expression of your opinion on a debatable issue relating to the work. This is the central assertion you will attempt to prove in your essay. NB: No first-person (I, me, we, etc.) in an essay of literary analysis.
  - d) A transition sentence leading into the next paragraph.
- 2) "Body" Paragraphs (Claim, Context, Evidence, Warrant—or Claim, Context, Quotation, Commentary--format): in which you make a claim that relates to your thesis; cite evidence in the form of specific quotes or passages from the text that relate to the claim; and provide a warrant that analyzes the evidence in relation to your thesis. In its simplest form, each body paragraph is organized as follows (these are explained below):
  - i. topic sentence / support thesis
  - ii. lead-in to concrete detail
  - iii. quotation/concrete detail
  - iv. warrant/commentary
  - v. transition and lead-in to next quotation/concrete detail
  - vi. quotation/concrete detail
  - vii. warrant/commentary
  - viii. concluding or clincher sentence
- b) Topic sentence: the first sentence of a body or support paragraph. It identifies one aspect of the major thesis and states a primary reason why the major thesis is true. It is expressed as a claim (assertion).
- c) Context for the quote you have chosen, also called "lead-in". For example, who will be quoted, and what is the context in which the character makes the statement you plan to quote? Make sure the claim and quote both relate directly to your thesis.
- d) The Quotation itself. When you make an argument about literature, the evidence most valued by your audience is likely to be details of the work itself. Direct quotations from the text are an especially powerful means of indicating that your claims are well grounded. You may also concisely refer to some other specific concrete detail from the story, such as an especially important event or sequence of events. Be very careful not to fall into the trap of simply retelling the story. Assume your reader has read it (I have!).