

Macbeth Literary Analysis Essay
Honors English 12
SOL: 12.6A-F

Purpose: Literary Analysis is a type of Expository essay that analyzes or looks closely at a specific aspect of a piece of literature such as the characters, theme, setting, symbolism, and so on.

Deadlines & Point Totals:

1. Thesis Statement & Outline are due on Wednesday, February 9, 2022 (30 points).
2. Final Copy is due on Monday, February 14, 2022 (100 points). (*Rough Draft on own*)

Writing Situation: Now that you have read and analyzed the play, you will write an analytical essay on *Macbeth*. Your essay should be a response to **one** of the following prompts.

1. Provide a critical analysis for the reasons behind Macbeth's failure. Is there a simple explanation?
2. Is Lady Macbeth more responsible than Macbeth for the murder of King Duncan? Is Lady Macbeth a more evil character than her husband and, if so, why?
3. The supernatural plays an important role in *Macbeth*. To what extent does it motivate Macbeth's actions?
4. *Macbeth* presents many themes for analysis. Choose one of the following themes - *Guilt and Conscience*, *Ambition*, *Appearance vs. Reality*, *Good vs. Evil*, & *Fate and Free Will* - and discuss how it developed throughout the play.

Prewriting Plan: In your notebook, brainstorm some ideas/answers to one or two of the prompts of your choice. Jot down as many ideas/answers as possible and do not edit yourself at all.

Now, choose the prompt that you had the most ideas/answers for and you are ready to create your thesis statement. **THE THESIS STATEMENT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR ESSAY.** Everything that you write in your essay is connected back to your thesis, so it needs to be strong.

Your thesis statement must make a claim and include three points (focal areas) that back up the claim.

What claim does your thesis make?

What are the three points (focal areas) that back up this claim?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Now, in your notebook, write your thesis in one or two complete sentences being sure to include the title of the play, the author's name, your claim, and the three points (focal areas) that back it up.

For example: In the play *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare, Lady Macbeth is the driving force in the action and the outcome of the play. The factors that contribute to her powerful role are her own ambition to become queen, the influence she has over her husband, and her connection to witchcraft.

After the establishment of your thesis statement, begin work on your outline so that you have a general plan to follow while writing; remember that your focal areas turn into the body paragraphs of your essay; whatever order you listed them in, in the thesis statement, that same order must be present on your outline and in your essay.

Essay Set-Up

Introduction:

*Immediately engage the reader (**attention getter**)
~get the reader "in the ballpark"

*Strong & complete **thesis statement (can be anywhere in the first paragraph)**

*Establish **context** (topic of essay)
~usually 2-3 sentences narrowing down to the point of the paper
~cite your source with title and/or author

Body: (minimum of three paragraphs)

*Begin paragraphs with a clear, concise **topic sentence**

~Use **concrete details (CD)**

~these include facts or quotes

~Create insightful **commentary** to support concrete details (2-3 comments per CD)

Conclusion:

*Transition into summary of key points

~Restate thesis (say it another way!)

~**Refer back to the attention getter and tie things up**

Writing Convention Standards

- Be sure to provide a **creative title** for your essay. (Hook your reader.)
- Your essay must present a clear and arguable thesis statement.
- Your essay must be organized with a well-crafted lead/introduction, body paragraphs (3), and an effective conclusion. **YOU NEED A MINIMUM OF FIVE PARAGRAPHS.**
- Each paragraph needs to have a **minimum** of five sentences, complete with proper capitalization and punctuation. If you can, try for a total of six to seven sentences per paragraph.
- **You must have three primary source quotes (from *Macbeth*) to support your thesis; THERE SHOULD BE A QUOTE TO BACK UP EACH OF YOUR FOCAL AREAS.**
- Your essay must demonstrate appropriate sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.
- You **may use "I" in your essay**, as this is an essay in which you are providing your analysis of the topic.
- Limit the use of contractions ("didn't" for "did not") UNLESS part of a direct quotation.
- Watch your subject-verb agreement; this must agree in number.
- Watch your pronoun-antecedent (noun being referred to) agreement; this must agree in gender and number.