



## Honors English IV – Senior Research Paper Literary Analysis Paper

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The senior research paper (SRP) is designed to allow students to access, understand, and interpret a specific author's work. The assignment will focus on several related ideas or elements, trace them throughout the work, and illustrate the impact of those ideas on the work as a whole. Students' analysis of the literature will demonstrate a thorough understanding of the literary work in question. Secondary support will be used to support student findings and give clarity and relationship to the major focal points.

### **Project Overview:**

- assignment of novels and reading groups
- read novels individually, taking notes and keeping reading journals to use in group discussions and individual development of the paper
- study literary criticism (how to criticize literature within a prescribed framework)
- discuss novels in common groups and generate possible thesis statements
- research authors/literature and effectively use professional literary criticisms
- develop a clear and specific thesis statement that examines the literature using one of the critical approaches presented
- outline and write rough drafts to demonstrate understanding of writing process
- revise, revise, revise

### **Final Paper:**

- 4-6 pages in length; typed, double spaced, 12 point Times New Roman, standard 1" margins
- minimum of four sources required for parenthetical citation within paper (one must be the novel you have read, obviously!); sophomore research tools like encyclopedias will not count toward citation minimum
- at least two supporting quotes required per contention/topic
- consistent reference to novel and clear defense of thesis
- an accurate works cited page of all texts cited, not all texts consulted
- no cover page, but all other MLA rules apply

### **The Process:**

The SRP process is just as important as the final product. SRP is meant to help students develop reading comprehension, research, and writing skills. However, none of this is possible if students do not put effort into the process. Therefore, it is imperative students spend quality time reading, reflecting, researching, and writing. The final SRP will be deemed unacceptable if students refuse to complete any portion of the assignment.

## SRP DEADLINES '07



In order to fulfill the research paper requirement for this class, you will be writing a literary analysis of a novel you read independently. This paper will be a process paper that will require a series of steps to reach the final draft version. These steps are outlined below with due dates. (Due dates are subject to change, but fair notice will be given.)

M Sept 17 – book check (bring book to class)

F Sept 21 – reading day (bring your book to class)

F Sept 28 – reading day (bring your book to class)

[M Oct 8 – Columbus Day, no school]

\*You must complete your reading by Tu Oct 9\*

Tu Oct 9 – thesis statement group work (bring novel to class!)

W Oct 10 & Th Oct 11 – library days

F Oct 12 – formal thesis statement due

F Oct 19 – outline work and peer feedback

F Oct 26 – list of sources and revised outline due (outline should be complete and should include quotes/evidence; you need to bring a second copy to turn in for Wagner; this will be collected in lieu of a rough draft)

F Nov 2 – typed first draft due for in-class peer editing

F Nov 9 – typed second draft due for in-class peer editing

Nov 12-19 – optional critiques in Writing Resource Center (by appointment only!)

Nov 12-14 – optional teacher feedback (by appointment only!)

Tu Nov 20 – final draft due and turned in with all previous drafts and peer critiques attached

*Failure to participate in this process will negatively affect your final paper grade.*



## H English IV - SRP READING JOURNALS

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In order to help you organize your thoughts for your upcoming paper, I'm asking that you take the time to make notes and journal about your thoughts. Please plan to write a quick journal in response to one of the following ideas at least every few chapters or 50 pages; *you need to write a minimum of three journal reflections*. Each entry can be handwritten or typed and should be about 1 page. You may choose any of the following for the focus of your journal, but make sure you thoroughly elaborate on your chosen focus and you do not approach your journal superficially. Try to avoid repeating the same approach on your next journal entry!

**Character Analysis:** Describe one major character by specifically referring to 1) the character's actions, 2) the character's words, and 3) things said about the character by the narrator or other characters in the novel. What do these things tell you about the character? What personality traits do they suggest? Be very specific with your examples from the book and what you think they imply about the character.

**Setting Analysis:** Describe the setting by referring to physical surroundings, including specific details used in the author's descriptions. For example, comment on the author's description of the character's apartment by explaining the black leather couches, the light pouring through the windows, and the classical music playing in the background. What do the author's details of the setting tell you? Why does the author include the description?

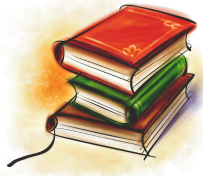
**Mood:** Identify a specific scene from your book and explain how the author develops the mood of the scene through the use of diction, syntax, imagery, and/or figurative language. For example, explain if this scene is tense, joyful, sad, morose, ecstatic, etc., and how the author portrays this.

**Tone:** Identify the author's attitude towards a character or an event in the novel. For example, is it clear that the author wants you to like or dislike a certain character? Does he/she want us to react in a positive or negative way to an event? How do you know? Explain how the author's diction, syntax, etc. portray this attitude.

**Plot & Diction:** Identify key plot points in the story. Make sure your choices focus on pivotal and important moments in the story. Include a description of the moment (*not a summary of the entire book!*) and an explanation of why this moment was important. Also explain the shift in language the author used to express the importance of this scene.

**Symbolism:** Describe any symbols that you have discovered while reading the novel. Give specific examples, and explain their symbolism. How do you know that the author is intentionally using something as a symbol?

**Theme:** Determine the main theme of your novel. How is this theme developed in the novel thus far? How do plot, character, and conflict/resolution contribute to the theme? As always, be specific with your examples.



## Honors English IV - Senior Research Paper

# Literary Criticism Approaches

For this project, you will need to choose a method by which to analyze your chosen piece of literature. There are myriad methods to use in examining literature, but we will study only a handful during this project. Remember that you are working with a partner/ small group to analyze your book, but this does not mean that you need to approach the analysis or organization with the same methods. Below is a short overview of the types of analysis and organization from which you may choose.

### Historical criticism

- tries to study literature through the period or movement in which it's written
- must show the methods of writing style, subject matter, and societal views which are specific to that era
- tries to study the literature as it relates to other works within the era as well as comparing it to works derived from other periods
- shows literature as evolving, dynamic entity
- apply trends of social, intellectual and literary trends to individual works
- approaches include definition of concepts as they relate to the work, comparison with other eras or with other works in the same era, and cultural traits the author uses

### Biographical criticism

- this is not a direct comparison to the author's life
- attempts to use author's life/ thought pattern in analyzing themes from the work
- may use one or two significant events from the author's life to show how literary work was affected/ created as a result
- illuminates elements within a work (local color, historical/ local events, themes, etc) and how the author approached those topics both in this work as well as others
- ask yourself if you identify with the author; if so, the work may seem more meaningful (look for universal themes or personalized tales)
- examines the author's intentions and intended audience

### Social criticism

- careful not to confuse with historical approach which looks at specifics of an era
- tries to recognize the reflection of the literature as it relates to society as a whole
- attempts to identify a social reality, including economic and social theory (i.e.: Great Depression era literature)
- criticism also includes the underlying solutions proposed by authors; examines the reform that the literature tries to bring about
- approach requires you to identify the social situations, the author's attitude toward them
- necessitates quality secondary sources to explain the theories presented

## Psychological criticism

- tries to apply modern psychological theories to authors and their works
- Sigmund Freud's a big one in this approach (see reading for details)
- considers characters as representative of real people who have desires, attitudes, dreams, goals, etc, like those of real people, thus explaining their behaviors
- looks at symbolic actions, dreams, and repetitive behaviors
- writing styles such as stream of consciousness fall into psychological criticisms

## Archetypal criticism

- requires you to refer to other works and provide examples from previous readings; a wide reading background is necessary
- archetypes are figures or patterns that recur in works of imagination (fiction)
- refers to communal experiences and memories (myth, symbols, rituals, etc) that are repeated throughout literature
- can be used to understand both the literature and the culture in which it's written
- archetypes offer structure to a work and deal with profound aspects of the human experience
- archetypal characters = characters who fit a certain mold such as the temptress, the star-crossed lovers, or the ruler
- archetypal situations = recurring situations in literature such as a quest, being set against a difficult task, or trying to discover oneself
- archetypal symbols or associations = suggest opposites elements which contribute to the understanding of the plot; light conveys goodness, prosperity, and cleanliness, versus dark conveys evil, despair and dirtiness



## Honors English IV - SRP

### So what do I need in my paper?

#### Introduction

Your introduction should clearly define/express the literary topics that will be examined within the body of your paper. Though it is not necessary to directly state your choice of criticism (biographical, historical, archetypal, etc.), it should be evident from the information you provide in this paragraph. The elements you use to support your criticism will involve theme, characterization, plot, figurative language, point of view, symbolism, tone, mood, or a variety of other ideas or literary elements. Your analysis should trace the development of these elements throughout the work and illustrate the impact of those elements on the work as a whole. The elements being analyzed should be clearly stated in the thesis statement.

#### Thesis statement

This should come near the end of your introductory paragraph. Here are some sample thesis statements for F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby.

- **Historical:**

Fitzgerald uses point of view and tone to emphasize that self-indulgence leads to despair for Jay Gatsby and Daisy Buchanan, but Nick Carraway's happier, if less extravagant existence, shows...

Explanation: Though it is not obvious in this thesis statement, the introduction and body of the paper will include references to the tendency toward self-indulgence that typifies the historical period of the 1920's.

- **Psychological:**

Jay Gatsby's hedonism exemplifies the Freudian id, Daisy Buchanan's restraint represents the superego, and Nick Carraway's awareness of the lack of joy in the lives of his wealthy friends illustrates the ego in order to...

Explanation: This thesis contains a more direct connection to the form of criticism; obviously references will be made to Freudian psychoanalytical theory. Though not directly stated the writer will be examining Fitzgerald's characterization of Gatsby, Daisy, and Nick.

- **Archetypal character:**

Fitzgerald characterizes Jay Gatsby as an outcast through his past and present inability to form a relationship with Daisy and his need to "buy" the company of others, demonstrating that....

Explanation: This thesis states the archetypal character "the outcast". The writer will use characterization and plot elements to prove that Gatsby is shunned by society.

<p><b>Caution:</b> Your thesis statement should not be an observation; the statement should be an arguable idea and include allusion to <i>why</i> the</p>
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#### The Body

Development of the body of the paper will come from your own observations and arguments, direct examples or paraphrases from the novel, and secondary source material. Secondary sources will include literary criticisms of the novel, historical or biographical information about the time period or author, or a variety of other sources (if you are unsure about a source, ask me). **Cliff notes, Sparknotes, Booknotes, etc. are not sources! You may use them to enhance your own understanding of the novel, but you may not cite them in your paper.**

Be sure to write in third person; phrase all of your observation/opinions as factual statements. Do not make your paper weak by saying, "I think." Likewise, avoid passive voice and weak word choice.

#### Conclusion

The conclusion of the paper should leave the reader with an overall impression that the topics presented have been thoroughly examined and effectively supported. The conclusion could be a combination of restated facts and your own statements, a general summing up of main points, or an overall observation of what was presented. The conclusion should NOT directly restate your thesis.

# THESIS PROPOSAL

Due: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thesis proposal.** In the following spaces, please write your proposed thesis statement and the supports you intend to use to prove your thesis. You do not have to delineate the entire argument(s) you hope to use, but briefly summarize why you created this thesis and how you can prove it is true (perhaps give an example(s) or roughly estimate major points you will use). Additionally, if you are experiencing any problems with this thesis or if you feel there are strong points to using this thesis, list those as well. A word of caution: if you are truly unsure about the validity of a thesis (versus simply being unsure about how to phrase it), you may want to reconsider your choice of statement. Do not choose a statement about which you are hesitant!

BOOK: \_\_\_\_\_

CRITICISM INTENDED: Historical Biographical Social Psychological Archetypal

LITERARY DEVICES: Characterization Conflict Local Color Mood Plot Setting

Symbolism Theme Tone

THESIS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

SUPPORTS: \_\_\_\_\_

▪ \_\_\_\_\_

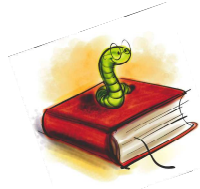
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▪ \_\_\_\_\_

OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL NOTES:



## Honors English IV - SRP - Outline

Now that you have established your thesis statement for your paper, you need to organize your thoughts in an outline. Your outline can be a traditional format using Roman numerals, or you can give topic sentences with bulleted points for each paragraph; your outline should include as much detail as possible (minimum requirement: thesis followed by all topic sentences and two supporting details for each topic sentence). The purpose of this exercise is to establish solid support for your thesis prior to writing your paper's body paragraphs.

Your outline must be typed, and should include your thesis statement, topic sentences for each body paragraph, and supporting points for each topic sentence. Remember that each topic sentence needs to directly link to the thesis statement; each supporting idea should link to the topic sentence of any given paragraph.

Here is an example of a thesis statement with organized, focused topic sentences:

**Thesis Statement** = As a result of his dedication toward breaking the curse of Thebes and his loyalty to the city, Oedipus will follow through not only with the intended punishment, but one more harsh and unfair to himself.

**Topic Sentence 1** = Oedipus' conviction that he will alleviate the curse is a strong indicator that he will follow through with the punishment he originally decreed.

**Topic Sentence 2** = Oedipus' loyalty to Thebes also implies he will carry out the intended punishment.

**Topic Sentence 3** = The punishment Oedipus inflicts upon himself is unfair and unjust.

In addition to clearly addressing the main idea of the paragraph, topic sentences should avoid referencing "parts" of the piece of literature. Avoid phrases such as "In the beginning of the novel", "At the end of the story", or the ever popular "In chapter sixteen." Instead refer to plot events: "After Barbara first realizes Tom's secret", "As Clara and Jessica stroll through the fair", "When Jim finally concedes that Joanne is right..."

### Sample outline with/without quotes

**Thesis Statement:** Vivid use of imagery in the description of the novel's setting and Nora's treatment within that setting contribute to the theme of isolation

- A. The setting directly contributes to the feeling of isolation.
  - 1. "The party traveled from the temperate regions of the foothills into the dry, cold, bracing air of the Sierras" (author 348).
  - 2. "The incessant pattering of rain drowned out every aspect of life" (author 351).
  - 3. The pines rocked and the storm swirled above the miserable group. They were alone in their struggle (author 354).
  
- B. Nora is also sentenced to an isolated existence because she is set apart from the others.
  - 1. Hierarchical class structure does not allow Nora to mingle with the other visitors (author 318).
  - 2. Nora suffers silently as she watches her son die at the hand of the regent (author 369)

**SAMPLE**

**Senior Research Paper Grading Rubric**

You must submit this page with your final paper. Please place the following items in order from top down in a standard size manila file folder marked with your name: grading rubric with your name *only*, final draft, first draft with attached peer critique, first draft with teacher comments, draft with Writing Center comments, second draft with attached peer critique, thesis proposal, draft works cited/annotation, any additional materials (notes, xeroxed materials, etc.).

<b><u>Introduction</u></b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>
Mentions the author and title of the book					
Contains a focused, clear thesis after a funnel intro					
Sets up the purpose and organization of the paper					

<b><u>Content</u></b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>50</b>
Contains a minimum of three sources, cited in relation to arguments										
Contains a minimum of three citations from the novel										
Support and quotes are well chosen and support writer's contentions										
Connection between literature and argumentation is analytical and insightful										
Thesis is thoroughly proven with examples and necessary clarification										
Summarization of the plot is not used in lieu of argumentation or evidence										

<b><u>Organization</u></b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>
Each body paragraph is coherent and contains one major area of focus					
Topic sentences are clearly written and state the focus of each paragraph					
Transitions are creative and link each paragraph to the thesis					
Arguments progress logically					

<b><u>Mechanics/ structure/ style</u></b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>
Paper is free of mechanical errors								
Paper is free of grammatical errors								
Paper is free of spelling errors								
Sentence structure is varied								
Word choice is appropriate and well suited to the style and tone of the paper								
Paper is written in third person								
Paper maintains present tense								

<b><u>Format/Preparation</u></b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
Contains a proper heading and title								
Quotes are cited properly								
Works cited is formatted properly								
All rough drafts or other required work is turned in to demonstrate the various stages of the writing process								

TOTAL

**SAMPLE**

nts)