

Essay4 - Essay Instructions - Traditional

This assignment is a research-based essay that includes one primary and at least one secondary source according to the instructions provided below. As with all essays, include a general thesis sentence that clearly indicates the purpose of the essay. The body of the essay must include paragraphs with topic sentences supporting the thesis. Provide details and specifics in the body paragraphs to support the topic sentences. Remember to avoid generalities such as “thing,” “stuff,” “society,” and “people.” This essay should be written using a third person objective point of view (she/he); no second person (you, us, our) or first person (I, me) may be used. Follow the steps below to complete this assignment and check for appropriate due dates listed in the class syllabus:

- 1) **Select a primary source:** Students will use “Once More to the Lake” by E.B. White as their primary source.
- 2) **Select a topic.** You may select a topic from one provided below or create your own topic; however, if you plan to create your own topic, make sure it is clearly stated in the thesis. Do not simply give your opinion or provide plot summary. Use MLA format including in-text citations and a Works Cited. (Refer to the “Writing about Text” handout for additional assistance. MLA information is provided in the class grammar book.)

“Once More to the Lake” Topics:

- a) What changes did the narrator notice in the road leading from the lake to the farmhouse, and what did these changes illustrate about the passage of time?
- b) Why is the lake such an important place for the narrator?
- c) Compare and/or contrast the lake during the two time periods the narrator visits, when he is a child and when he is an adult.

3) **Locate one secondary source.** A secondary source is an article written by an expert about the primary source. Using either the JStor or Gale databases available on-line from IRSC’s library web site, look for secondary source material to support your thesis. **One secondary source is required.** To access these databases, go to this URL: <http://www.irsc.edu/libraries/findarticles/findarticles.aspx>. Under the Library Databases heading, select Database by Name, and sign on. To access the library databases, you will need a Borrower ID and PIN. Your Borrower ID is your student ID number. Your PIN is the MMDD of your birth. For example, if your birthday is July 31, your PIN is 0731. If you need assistance, consider visiting your closest campus library branch or contact the library either by phone at 772-462-7600 or use Ask a Librarian at <http://www.askalibrarian.org>.

No Internet sources of any kind will be accepted. You need a minimum of one source from either the JSTOR or Gale databases. Students who insist on using unapproved sources will receive a failing grade for this assignment.

4) **Write the outline.** Write a general thesis sentence, **which clearly connects to one of the approved topics above, and a formal outline using complete sentences.** This is a graded assignment. See the syllabus for the outline due date. Formal outlines must include grammatically correct complete sentences (not fragments). Outlines should have a minimum of two topic sentences that support (not simple repeat) the thesis sentence. Topic sentences should have at least two supporting details from the text. See the sample outline in the “Writing about Text” handout for an example.

3) **Final Submission:** Write a 500 - 750 word essay following the format/submission requirements provided on the syllabus. Essays that do not follow this format will not be accepted. See the syllabus for the final due date. **Only a final submission is required,** but the instructor will briefly review draft versions if they are sent in at

least 3 weekdays (not including Saturdays or Sundays) before the final version is due. Drafts should be formatted per syllabus instructions and sent as Angel email attachments. Drafts for this assignment are not eligible for grading since they are optional. Final essays should be submitted in the corresponding Angel drop box as an attachment.

Note: Follow the general writing guidelines below as you create your draft and final essays for this assignment.

General Writing Guidelines

1. Never use the word “thing” in any form (something, nothing, anything).
2. Avoid vague references to “people.” Who are these people? Say who they actually are instead of referring to them generally.
3. Never use second person: we, our, your. You should not “talk” to the reader or refer to him or her in any way. Be careful not to use commands as the “you” is understood.
4. Unless specifically required, never use first person (I). You are not to give your opinion. You are to state facts and back them up with evidence from the text.
5. Unless otherwise instructed, assume that your reader has read the story, poem, or play you are discussing. Do not retell the work because simple retelling is not analysis.
6. Do not use clichés, trite expressions, or overly used phrases. Be original. Use your own words instead.
7. Avoid unnecessary or inappropriate use of the passive voice. Make the subjects of the sentences do the action of the verbs.
8. Use appropriate diction. You are not writing a letter to a friend.
9. Generalizations need to be backed up with evidence from the text either through direct quotations, paraphrasing, or summarizing. For example, if you write that a character was well-liked, you must then give specific details from the text that show why he was well-liked.
10. Make sure your piece has a unique title that relates to your topic. It should be centered above the body of the paper. Do not put essay titles in quotes or underline. Use initial capitalization. See *Writing Matters* for assistance with capitalization rules.
11. Titles of short stories or essays referenced in the paper are put in quotation marks while titles of books or plays are underlined or italicized.
12. Use present tense throughout: “Martin Luther King Jr. **uses** numerous references to historical American documents in his speech.”
13. When quoting directly from the text, do not use a drop quote. Short, direct quotes should be incorporated into the text using a signal phrase. Assuming you are quoting from the class text, a page number in parenthesis should be included at the end of the sentence that includes the quote. See the quotes handout as well as the MLA information in *Writing Matters*.
14. Be careful of giving opinions in your writing by using words and phrases such as “obviously” or “it seems” or “it’s easily understood that.”
15. Do not refer to the reader: “The reader understands the tension building in the story.” It is impossible to know what every reader is thinking, and guessing at what readers think is not analysis.
16. Have a strong thesis sentence. This is the focus of your paper, and the body of your paper should support this thesis. A thesis should be a complete sentence.
17. Make sure you introduce the author and title of the work you will be writing about in the introductory paragraph.
18. Do not tell the reader what you are going to do. Instead, just do it. For example, don’t do the following: “I’m going to tell you how to write an essay.” Or “In conclusion...”