

You have signed up for English 11 Honors for the 2013-14 school year. As part of the curriculum for next year you will be required to do some summer reading as well as write a paper.

**First read the assigned book *The Scarlet Letter*. Then complete the following writing assignment for the first day of class:**

In a 2-3 page paper, examine how the novel develops a message about one important aspect of the human condition. Possible subjects for this essay include, but are not limited to: death, love, family, war, or justice.

Papers should be typed and formatted according to MLA standards. Refer to <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/> for MLA formatting instructions and guidelines.

Also refer to the handout "How to Write a Book Analysis".

**REMEMBER: IF YOU DON'T COMPLETE THE SUMMER WORK, YOU WILL BE DROPPED FROM THE HONORS CLASS AND ENROLLED IN A REGULAR ENGLISH 11 SECTION.**

### HOW TO WRITE A BOOK ANALYSIS by Ronda Walker

Although a book analysis, like a book report, spends some time discussing the content of the book, its main purpose is not informational, but analytic and persuasive. The writer, in analyzing the content, format, argument and context within which the book was written, argues that the book is worth reading or not. **A book analysis is a description, not a summary, of the book.**

A critical analysis is one in which the writer describes and evaluates the book, in terms of accepted literary and historical standards, and supports the evaluation with evidence from the text. The following pointers are meant to be suggestions for writing a critical analysis.

Here are a few tips that I have found helpful when I sit down to analyze a book:

- \*Before you begin writing, try thinking of your reader as a friend to whom you're telling a story.

- \*Try to get the main theme of the book across in the beginning of your analysis. Your reader should know right away what he or she is getting into should they choose to read the book!

- \*Think about whether the book is part of a genre. Does the book fit into a type like mystery, adventure, or romance? What aspects of the genre does it use?

- \*What do you like or dislike about the book's writing style. Is it funny? Does it give you a sense of the place it is set? What is the author's "voice" like?

- \*Make sure your analysis explains how you feel about the book and why, not just what the book is about. A good analysis should express the reviewer's opinion and persuade the reader to share it, to read the book, or to avoid reading it

### STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK ANALYSIS

#### 1. Introduction

- \* A general description of the book: title, author, subject and format. Try to mention the name of the author and the book title in the first paragraph. – There is nothing more frustrating than reading an analysis of a great book but not knowing who wrote it and what the title is! Here you can include details about who the author is and where he/she stands in the field of inquiry. You can also link the title to the subject to show how the title explains the subject matter.

- \* A brief summary of the purpose of the book and its general argument or theme. Include a statement about who the book is intended for.

- \* Your thesis about the book: is it suitable/appropriate piece of writing about the problem for the audience it has identified?

#### 2. Analysis of text:

- \* The main body of the analysis should logically develop your thesis. The aim should be toward logical development of the central point. Quoted material should be put in quotation marks, or indented, and properly footnoted. If possible, use one paragraph for each point you want to make about the book. It's a good way to emphasize the importance of the point.

- \* What is the writer's style: simple/technical; persuasive/logical?

- \* How well does the organizational method (comparison/contrast; cause/effect; analogy; persuasion through example) develop the argument or theme of the book? (Give examples to support your analysis.)

- \* What evidence does the book present to support the argument? (Give examples: maps, charts, essays by experts, quotes, newspaper clippings)

- \* How convincing is the evidence? (Select pieces of evidence that are weak, or strong, and explain why they are such.)

- \* How complete is the argument?

- \* Are there facts and evidence that the author has neglected to consider? (Here you may use a comparable book on the same topic to illustrate what has been omitted.)

#### 3. Evaluation of the Text:

- \* Give a brief summary of all the weakness and strengths you have found in the book. Does it do what it set out to do?

- \* Evaluate the book's overall usefulness to the audience it is intended for.

- \* Note why you liked/disliked the book.

#### 4. Conclusion:

- \* The concluding paragraph may sum up or restate your thesis or may make the final judgment regarding the book. No new information or ideas should be introduced in the conclusion.