

# Analytical Assessment

Your assessment will assess your ability to respond to a text in an analytical manner. While this might include short responses, Close textual analysis, reviews, multimodal and oral presentations the most common method of assessing your ability to analyse and respond to a text will be an essay.

**There are 5 steps to the final polished essay. For the first essay you will write in English the steps are as follows.**

1. You will be given the essay question to take home and plan.
2. Then in class you will complete an A4 page of notes.
3. You will bring the notes to class to use when you write your draft.
4. Your teacher will mark and discuss your draft with you.
5. You will then write the final polished essay.

**To achieve a high mark in a literary essay you will need to**

- Demonstrate an understanding of the points relevant to the question you have chosen.
- Create a well structured argument that successfully persuades the reader that your point is valid.
- Provide evidence from the text and maybe secondary texts that reinforces your argument.
- Acknowledge all your sources.
- Write in a fluent and interesting style.

Sounds tricky but it isn't really. Most successful essays succeed or fail at the planning stage.

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## PLAN

Do the sums! Your essay should be 800 to 1000 words. That can seem very daunting. Now think of it as 5 paragraphs each of about 200 words. That means too that after you have written your introduction you will only have room for 3 or 4 ideas to work on.

## STEP 1

**On your page of notes include:**

- An opening sentence with a clear contention, outlining your position.
- Three or four points that support your argument.
- Ideas that show a sound understanding of the text and are relevant to the question.
- Quotations that provide evidence to support your points and the pages they come from.

Remember that quotations that have their sources acknowledged are good evidence and reinforce your argument. Quotations that lack citation might be considered plagiarism.

Don't try to write the whole essay!

## STEP 2

Plan your time. Write a simple plan using the essay formula. Write your draft.

## STEP 3

Edit your draft. Use the advice and teacher suggestions to produce a polished essay.

# ESSAY FORMULA

## **Introduction**

Provide an opening sentence (the contention) which introduces your argument and the position you are taking. Make it as clear and as memorable as possible. Make sure it is a response to the question. Then briefly introduce the three or four points you are going to discuss.

## **Central paragraphs 1, 2, 3 maybe 4**

### **For each paragraph**

The formula is to provide a point, expand and develop it and provide evidence (quotation + citation). Make sure your points flow clearly from one to the other in a logical manner. Back your points with clear examples from the text. Keep your quotations short and relevant. Avoid lengthy retelling and waffle.

## **Conclusion**

- In your conclusion restate the major points of your argument.
- Try to express them succinctly and a little differently.
- Discuss how the issues raised by your essay might apply more generally.
- Give a personal view of the argument and text.
- Do remember that your conclusion should reinforce not repeat your contention.
- Finish your argument.
- No new points or evidence.

## ***Key things to remember***

Make sure you have answered the question. When writing a literature essay there is not a right answer as there can be many different interpretations of a text. But do make sure that your essay is a response to the question.

Do not retell the story. You may describe incidents from the text to illustrate a point, but keep them short and sweet and make sure they are relevant.

Essays are marked on their content, structure and style. Try to write in a lively and interesting manner, avoid the pompous professor style. If you're not sure if a word or phrase is right – do not use them. If you do not understand what you've written your teacher probably won't either!

**Avoid the dull list style** you may have learnt in high school.

**DO NOT USE** - In this essay I.....Firstly...Secondly....and In Conclusion!