

Literary Analysis Mini-Essays

Discussion Groups

We need to talk! This novel has so much to say and so much to discuss. Each night for four nights, you will be asked to write a short essay (multi-paragraph, *single-spaced*, one page size 10 or 12 font) on a given element of fiction. This is not a formal essay so you may use first person. Then each day, you will meet with a group of four or five to discuss the ideas you've examined in your essay. You will take notes in a shared Google Doc in your groups. The idea is to articulate some of your ideas in writing, share those ideas, and summarize what you've learned about the novel. Each day, you will take notes on your shared Google Doc that synthesizes what you have been discussing. You will receive credit for doing the essays but they will not be graded by me.

Your essays will receive completion credit. You will be graded on your group discussion and summary.

You can use these to help you understand the novel as you analyze it, write your mini-essays, and study for the final test. You will get out of this what you put into it so put forth your best thought and effort.

Exposition (Chaps 1-3)

Exposition is basically the introduction to the novel. It includes the main characters, the setting(s) and the major conflict. Setting includes time, place and mood. Quickly identify the setting of the novel. As you discuss mood, consider the tone of the author; these two terms are often tightly intertwined. What is the conflict? What is causing the conflict? The main conflict concerns the main character (the protagonist). What other conflicts exist? As you consider the setting, particularly at the beginning of the novel, do a little quick research about what is going on at the time and place. How does this connect to the exposition?

Character (Chaps 1-7) (Choose one major character)

How is that character distinctive? What are his/her opinions? What are his/her motivation? What does he/she want? Why does he/she want this? Where in the story is this made clear? Who or what stands in the character's way? How is the character developed? Is she flat or round? How does this impact the novel? How does he/she relate to the theme or plot? How do we learn about any aspects of the character's motivations-- Dialogue? Actions? Thoughts?

Verbal Expression (Chaps 1-10) Choose one:

1. Imagery--How does the author convey meaning by creating mental images/ pictures that depend on an appeal to the senses(seeing, touching, tasting, hearing, smelling)? When are images *repeated* or *repeated with variations*, thus forming a pattern? Which images are most striking or memorable? How do the images become part of the author's style?

2. Symbol--Does the author write symbolically? What patterns are involved with symbolism? What do the symbols mean? How do they contribute to the theme and/or plot?

3. Narrative Technique--How is the story told (who tells it and how)? Does the point of view ever change? Do we come to know the narrator as a person? Is the narrator a participant in the story or is he removed, distant, essentially unknown? Do you get judgments from the narrator? Does the author seem separate from the narrator?

4. Style--What is the distinctive voice; the personality of the writing? How does the author use syntax (sentence structure), sentence length and complexity, use of figurative language, imagery and diction.

5. Organization--How does the author structure the story? What sequence is used? What principals or organization are used (Chronological? Chronological with flashback? Exposition and lots of summary? etc...)

Theme (Chaps 1-15)

What are the characters' opinions in the novel? Draw conclusions about what that means in terms of the theme. What do the thoughts and actions of the characters say about human nature?