

Dear Parents and Students,

May 28, 2018

Welcome to Advanced Placement English Literature. Below are details about your summer reading assignment; in the fall you'll take one objective, challenging test on all three components. Reading and understanding them will keep your mind sharply honed and enlighten you about works that have become part of our cultural vocabulary. Your written responses will help me assess your skills so I can plan lessons based on what you need. Most importantly, reading these books thoughtfully is the first step toward contributing to next year's shared intellectual circle, as we all come together with our views about a shared set of stories. Preparing well, both on this assignment and throughout the year, will help you become a valued, mindful member of the AP Lit '19 community.

Did you love reading in elementary school but found, as time passed, that you just didn't have the time or focus? Do you suspect that your glances at a screen, whether feverish or absent-minded, have only fractured your attention span? This summer, try to get back in the habit of reading for enjoyment. The ironic fact that I'm an English teacher assigning reading isn't lost on me here. Nevertheless, I urge you to re-enter into the timeless stream of conversations that writers are having with you and with the world. A book by the pool, a newspaper in a lounge chair, a magazine in your backpack. Savor it all: plays, YA novels, screenplays, crime thrillers, biographies, poetry. Don't worry about outside reading being "literary" enough. Choose anything that interests you.

Just a note on the course: you students today are under a lot of pressure to load up on AP courses. I really do get it. You don't want to let people down, you're concerned about what people think, you mistakenly think English12R is easy or only for unmotivated students, and you are anxious about the competition out there. If online summaries are your norm, however, if you find reading tedious, or if you don't enjoy English and only want to take AP Lit for your transcript, you may find yourself in over your head. Consider what you are doing to yourself, because there are only so many hours in the day. Think carefully about what you truly enjoy. Do you love reading, discussions, and intensive writing? Are you looking forward to being challenged in these areas? Are you a student who doesn't cut corners? If not, you may be putting yourself in a situation which guarantees you unnecessary stress and misery. **Please, please understand that this is a highly demanding course involving a lot of time, including large amounts of dense outside reading (going way beyond plot) and rigorous work on your writing. Think about your time, your health, your joy, and the need for balance in your life. Your well-being comes first.**

Summer Assignment

1. Read Hamlet by William Shakespeare. Focus on the motifs of hearing, confinement, plays, political leadership, overthinking, and identity. Watch at least two productions of *Hamlet*; the text is so psychologically complex that it supports an infinite number of interpretations and directorial decisions. I recommend the Mel Gibson and Kenneth Branagh film versions. Watch and absorb. Select significant quotations and write written explanations of the context and importance of each quotation (your reaction, how it fits into the themes of the play, what it shows about a character, analysis of key words, how it relates to the motifs I just listed). Include line and page numbers. This writing should be your own—you submit your summer work to turnitin.com in the fall. AVOID THE WORD “SHOWS.”

I'm looking for original thought. I tire of the same hackneyed quotations that are easily available online when one googles “quotes from *Hamlet/Pride and Prejudice*.” Choose passages that might not be immediately salient, but which do, upon analysis, show something significant about Shakespeare's theme or characters. You should have at least fifteen quotations, and they should be from throughout the play, not just the beginning.

2. Read Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice. Gather at least fifteen significant quotations, with the same guidelines as above. It has been said that Austen and Shakespeare are the two authors of the western world who best understand human nature. As you read, don't miss the lively humor and wit in Jane Austen's elegant, finely crafted sentences. Consider the question of social strictures: are these characters rewarded or punished for bad behavior? In Regency England, how does a female find and assert her identity? If you dislike the idea of interrupting reading to jot down quotations, read first and select the passages afterward. AVOID THE WORD “SHOWS.”
3. Study the “How to Write a Literary Essay” packet (attached).

If anything you ever turn in contains *any* work that is not your own, no matter how small (concepts, one line), then you'll receive a zero for the whole assignment. (Correctly cited quotations from *Pride and Prejudice* and *Hamlet* are fine—just use specific page numbers and information about what edition you read.) I want to know what *you* think, not what someone online says the story means. I take plagiarism very seriously, and so will

colleges, resulting in possible expulsion. Any bit of plagiarism means that you'll receive an administrative write-up, and your place in the National Honors Society will be in jeopardy. No exceptions or second chances. The moment you take credit for someone else's words and ideas, it's out of my hands. Please immerse yourself in the author's world and his or her ideas, embracing your authority as a careful, thoughtful reader. Besides, who says that some dude on bookhelperzz.com is any authority on meaning? His aim is to help people *avoid* meaning and exonerate them from the responsibilities of thought. Boo.

Spend time on AP Central, familiarizing yourself with the exam and its expectations. Browse in bookstores. Review your returned essays. Are you concerned about your writing skills, either your mechanics or your clarity? Or are you looking for a light, informative read that's also entertaining? I highly recommend Strunk & White's classic, *The Elements of Style*, a brief guide about clear, purposeful writing. Yes, writing guides can be witty and fun to read! You'll see.

If you're looking for book recommendations, find me on Goodreads. ☺

"The real community of man, in the midst of all the self-contradictory simulacra of community, is the community of those who seek the truth, of the potential knowers...of all men to the extent they desire to know. But in fact, this includes only a few, the true friends, as Plato was to Aristotle at the very moment they were disagreeing about the nature of the good...They were absolutely one soul as they looked at the problem. This, according to Plato, is the only real friendship, the only real common good. It is here that the contact people so desperately seek is to be found...This is the meaning of the riddle of the improbable philosopher-kings. They have a true community that is exemplary for all the other communities." ~Allen Bloom

In AP Lit, we look at how writers use language to answer soul-searching questions about what it means to be human. You may not always agree with the authors or your peers, but as you listen thoughtfully, you become part of a true scholarly cadre. In our "community of those who seek the truth," we will analyze highly challenging works, exploring not only a work's content and philosophical background, but also the writing style with which the author has chosen to present it (close reading). No fluffing or bluffing. I am looking forward to meeting and working with you! Have a great summer.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Gavin
English Teacher
Eastchester High School

HOW TO WRITE A LITERARY ESSAY

INTRODUCTION

Functions of an Introduction

- Introduces your reader to basic background information about the literary work, presents the concepts your paper will ponder
- Presents your thesis

Necessary Elements of an Introduction

- 1.) **Title and type of literary work** --, e.g., novel, “short story”, “poem”, play, etc.
- 2.) **Author’s full name** should be given the first time ONLY (thereafter, you should refer to the author by last name only).
Ex: In Harper Lee’s novel To Kill a Mockingbird, Lee suggests...
- 3.) **Characters should be identified** the first time they are mentioned (which should happen in the first paragraph). Ex: In *Night*, Elie Wiesel and his father, both concentration camp victims, have different methods of survival.
- 4.) **A brief orientation to the story or setting** should be provided (just enough information, one or two sentences tops) about the storyline. It makes your essay understandable to your reader – DO NOT SUMMARIZE the entire work! Spend more time on the universal

concepts the work addresses (faith, justice, knowledge, compassion, etc.).

5.) **Thesis statement** –last sentence or two of introductory paragraph

Thesis Statement

Thesis = Argument + Areas of Support

The areas of support **MUST** be written in the order in which you plan to present them in your essay.

The shape of a thesis statement:

Argument

Areas of Support

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

You can always name your areas of support and *then* present your argument.

Ex:

- The triumph of the id in *A Separate Peace* is inevitable, as revealed by Knowles' nature symbolism, imagery about Brinker's mock trial, and gruesome details about Finny's death.
- In her poem, "An Invitation," Barbara Lock uses metaphors about time, diction about sleep, and imagery about the passage of time in order to convey anxious tenderness for her son.
- In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee conveys the intractable nature of intolerance, even in a small friendly town, by characterizing the family of Tom Robinson, the fake alcoholism of Dolphus Raymond, and Scout's disastrous first day at school.
- William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* validates Hobbes' assertion that human life is nasty, brutish and short. The author showcases this harsh truth by providing gory details about Piggy's death, the disappearance of the boy with the mulberry birthmark, and holy imagery describing Simon's body.

- By employing surreal symbolism of the pig's head, the characterization of Simon as a gentle soul, and details about Jack's brutal dictatorship, William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* reveals that Hobbes is correct: there is an inner beast lurking in all of us.

Thesis Statement, cont.

Argument (sometimes called a "Controlling Idea"):

- The argument of your essay is a statement about the author's purpose or theme in a work of literature.
- The argument is not a plot summary: it is **what you are trying to prove**. The argument should be a statement about what the author is showing about life, society, or human nature.

Area of Support:

- Areas of support are **points or topics within a literary work** that can be **developed as paragraphs** in support of the argument.

Ex: In Liam O'Flaherty's short story, "The Sniper," O'Flaherty conveys the horrors of war and its disastrous effects on a group's collective identity. By reading the story carefully, we would be able to find the following areas of support:

- Physical dangers (first body paragraph)
- Psychological effects (second body paragraph)

Ex: In Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Atticus Finch and Mr. Gilmer both use the same strategies of questioning, but for different purposes. The areas of support could be the following:

- Manner of addressing Tom
- Types of questions (rhetorical vs. straightforward yes/no)
- Showing Tom's level of strength
- Playing on pathos/emotions/fear

*Note that each area of support includes more than just one quote and example. Each area of support would include quotes from BOTH Atticus and Mr. Gilmer.

BODY PARAGRAPHS

(also called “areas of support” because they are topics that support the thesis)

1.) Open with a topic sentence which names the topic and links to the argument of the paper.

2.) Each body paragraph should have at *least* two (aim for more in a longer paper)) quotations from the text. Work quotations in smoothly and break them down fully, analyzing the words and their significance. What are the connotations and denotations of the key words?

3.) End the paragraph with several sentences linking back to your argument. Re-read the essay prompt to make sure your body paragraph has addressed what the essay question has asked. Re-read your thesis: how do all of the quotes and analysis in this body paragraph explicitly prove your argument? What is the author trying to get us to understand?

-----SAMPLE BODY PARAGRAPH-----

The essay prompt asked the student to show what the author (George Eliot)’s attitude is toward the character Dorothea Brooke, and to explain the techniques Eliot uses to convey this attitude.

While Eliot clearly reveres Dorothea’s beauty, she mildly mocks Dorothea’s own reverence of God. Eliot characterizes Dorothea as an extremely pious young woman. She ridicules Miss Brooke’s eagerness to renounce horseback riding, an activity that she feels “that she enjoy[s] in a pagan sensuous way” (59). While her morality and spirituality make her a beautiful person, Eliot also implies that Dorothea takes her devoutness to extremes. Her religious devotion prevents her from enjoying a typical, jovial youth. Eliot also points out that her extreme piety causes her to have “childish ideas about marriage.” Miss Brooke claims to wish to marry a pious man, who can help her to remain holy and informed. Dorothea’s ideas concerning her religious lifestyle seem absurd, considering that she is quite gorgeous and intelligent, and could be taking advantage of every enjoyable activity that her surroundings have to offer her. Even though Eliot scorns Dorothea’s excessive piety, her amazement involving Dorothea’s spirituality show a respect and interest in her world view and behavior.

Notice that there are only two quotations, but they are explained fully (and the word “quote” is never used). After the quotes and analysis comes further explanations of what Eliot’s attitude is, showing complexity: it’s not described just as “respectful,” but “respect,” “interest,” “scorn,” and “amazement.” The last several sentences elaborate on what Eliot’s attitude toward Dorothea really is—and that was the argument of the paper.

BODY PARAGRAPHS, cont.

In any close reading essay:

- The argument is going to be about what the author is trying to convey (purpose, tone, etc.). **WHAT** the author is saying.
- The body paragraphs will each analyze one *strategy* or *technique* the author uses to convey that purpose. **HOW** the author is saying it.

As you read a passage, scan for patterns. If the author refers to nature more than once, uses the color blue more than once, or comments on social gatherings more than once, then those are all techniques and can each get their own body paragraphs. Close reading passages will always have several of these for you to analyze. Passages that the College Board selects will be chock full of these patterns for you to separate out and identify.

The body paragraph is where you connect your evidence (quotations) with the argument. **After giving a quotation and explaining its significance, make sure you connect the evidence to your argument *with several sentences*.**

Ex:

The imagery of the environment’s textures and tangibility emphasizes the devastating impact of the wolf’s death on the boy’s spirituality. The beginning of the passage focuses on externalities, the feeling of the wolf’s fur, “bristly with the blood dried upon it.” The man’s actions are described in long, vivid sentences detailing his mechanical movements, never deviating from the man’s agenda of, “crouch[ing] in the dark,” and “wash[ing] the blood out of [the blanket].” All of these actions revolve around the tangible world that the man can touch and feel. He is trying to formulate a routine that accounts for the absence of the wolf. However as the man reflects on the wolf’s death, the imagery adopts dreamier imagery. He imagines her, “Running in the mountains, running in the starlight...” attempting to find a tangible home for her intangible soul, something he

can no longer hold. The man is not upset by the event, but looks at it with the same, “fear and marvel,” that his fellow animals experience. The intangibility of death is further contrasted with the body left behind as the author describes the character, “[Taking] up her stiff head out of the leaves an [holding] what cannot be held. The end of the wolf’s life forces the man to confront his views on the spirit and the soul because it reminds him of his own mortality and the destination of his soul.

Topic Sentence

The topic sentence is the first sentence of each body paragraph.

Each area of support (paragraph) needs a topic sentence.

Topic sentence = One area of support + reference to the paper’s argument

Examples:

- Liam O’Flaherty depicts the complex and gruesome effects of war on the individual first by presenting the physical dangers of war.
- John Knowles cautions us about the the id’s subversive danger by presenting war-like details about the violent blitzball game.
id’s subversive nature (argument) + details about blitzball (first area of support)

Argument + area of support
triumph of id peer pressure of the tree

Ex: John Knowles showcases the lurid triumph of the id by highlighting the peer pressure of jumping out of the tree.

Ex: The peer pressure of jumping out of the tree reveals John Knowles’ view that the id in human nature will always triumph.

Argument + area of support
triumph of idacademic competition

Ex: John Knowles emphasizes the dangerous power of human nature’s id with several examples of academic competition.

Ex: The motif of academic competition reveals the author's view that in human nature, the id ultimately triumphs no matter what attempts we make to be civilized.

Each body paragraph in your essay needs to begin with a **clear, complete topic sentence**.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion leaves the reader convinced that:

- 1.) Your thesis has been supported.
- 2.) The argument that you have made has led to some deeper understanding of the text. What is the author eager to show about what kind of world this is and how we are to live in it?

Specific Strategies for Writing Conclusions

- 1.) Rephrase your thesis statement in a fresh way. Don't introduce any new evidence.
- 2.) Discuss the larger message of the text as a whole. What is the "big picture"? How is our understanding and/or appreciation of the story enriched by analyzing it in this way?
- 3.) Incorporate the universals. Don't boil the author's work down to a treacly moral; not every literary work is a call to action. The author doesn't just want to convey an accurate portrayal of a character for its own sake. The portrayal will serve another purpose. In this passage, what is the author trying to show us about knowledge, storytelling, family, suffering, nobility, virtue, honor, social hierarchies, wisdom, betrayal...what is the author, in this passage, showing about these universals? Ponder the work's grand ideas.

Example: With her complex characterization of Walter Lee, Hansberry raises the black male above the typical stereotype. Walter is not a social problem, a mere victim of matriarchy. Rather,

Hansberry creates a character who struggles with his fate and rises above it. In doing so, she elevates Walter Lee above narrow stereotypes, representing him as a fully rounded and psychologically complex human being. The exterior behaviors Walter and his family exhibit often mask deeper senses of injustice and survival. As James Baldwin puts it in Notes of a Native Son, “Time has made some changes in the Negro face.”

Three Sample Essay Structures for *To Kill a Mockingbird*

1. **Education:** comparing what is learned and how

Argument: showing that informal education is more helpful to Scout than formal education

Areas of Support

- a. school
- b. family
- c. community

Conclusion: what the author is suggesting about how one learns the most (or the most important) lessons

2. **Individual v. Group:** a close look at the Old Sarum Gang and William Carlos Williams’ poem “At the Ball Game”

Argument: the triumph of the individual over the group (individual reasoning v. mob mentality)

Areas of Support

- a. How groups are portrayed
 1. WCW
 2. TKM
- b. How individuals are portrayed
 1. WCW
 2. TKM

Conclusion: What authors suggest about the potential of each

3. **Innocence**

Argument: How characters lose their innocence affects the type of person each will become; choose only three characters, one from each pairing

(Boo or Mayella,	Jem or Dill,	and Scout)
harsh,	some difficulties,	relatively painless

Areas of Support

- a. how the child is nurtured
- b. ... responds to authority

c. ... interacts with others

Conclusion: speculating how the characters will turn out

Note: a student pointed out that Dill would likely work better than Jem for several reasons: distance from Scout/Finch family, issues of neglect, honesty, etc.

Using Quotations in Your Writing

*A quote should never stand on its own as its own sentence.

1.) Avoid using the word “quote” in your paper. “In the text it says” is THE phrase to avoid. Instead of writing over and over again, “Ralph says,” or “The author writes,” try the following variations. They work equally well with direct quotations or paraphrases:

Ralph says, “_____”				
reports	suggests	observes	asserts	
emphasizes	declares	exclaims	maintains	

In her famous play, *A Raisin in the Sun*, Lorraine Hansberry argues that... demonstrates... maintains... suggests... conveys...

In a 2001 (book, “article,” or whatever) entitled . . . , the author examines the subject of catfish and observes that...

According to Scout, Atticus “clenched his jaw angrily.”

2.) Avoid the “this shows” structure, because the structure of giving a quotation then saying, “this shows,” becomes sing-songy and does not flow well.

Momaday describes the earth on this landscape as, “dry, cracked, and brown.” This shows how desolate the landscape is.

The author says that Dorothea is “pious, but beautiful.” This shows her complex nature.

Instead, try varying the “this shows” structure, as in the examples below:

Momaday describes the earth on this landscape as, “dry, cracked, and brown.” His monosyllabic diction emphasizes the atmosphere’s tedious, bleak deadness.

The author says that Dorothea is “pious, but beautiful,” highlighting the complexity of her appeal.

IN SUM—AVOID THE FOLLOWING:

- The word “quote” or “quotation.”
- “In the text it says” or “This shows.”
- Using a quotation on its own as a sentence. Work a quotation in smoothly with your own words.

Brackets and Ellipses

Brackets are used when you quote something but have to change it to make sense in your sentence. Do not use ellipses in the beginning or at the end of a quotation. Example of *incorrect* ellipses: The boys all yell, “...kill the beast! Cut her throat!...”

Let's say the text you are quoting reads, "Come, gentle warrior, and learn how to fight on the battlefields, learn how to cast aside your doubts and fears, how to stand with your fellow soldier in the midst of combat." Do not use a whole sentence—trim the quote and use only what you need. In order to make it work with what you are saying, trim it. Use brackets to show where you trim it, indicating with brackets that you have altered the original for the sake of clarity, thus:

John's father tells him to "cast aside [his] doubts and fears." The soldier is told that he must "stand with [his] fellow soldier in the midst of combat."

Often you may have to use **ellipses**, those three dots. You use those to show when you have cut out part of a longer quote to make it fit with what you are saying. Use ellipses to show that you have trimmed for the sake of clarity:

John's father tells him, "Come, gentle warrior..., cast aside your doubts and fears." John needs to learn how, as his father tells him, to "fight on the battlefields ..., how to stand with [his] fellow soldier in the midst of combat."

Integrating Quotations Smoothly

There are three main ways to TIE quotations smoothly into text:

TAG (give the quote, then explain it afterward)

- "A plague on both your houses!" Mercutio exclaims as he is dying, cursing both Montagues and Capulets for the violence which has led to his death.
- "A man has to *be* something," Walter confides to Mam.

INTRODUCE (introduce the quotation, then quote)

- As Jackson leaves the compound where he and Ameera have spent many happy hours, he mutters, "You brute. You brute."
- Momaday describes the earth on this landscape as, "dry, cracked, and brown."

EMBED

- Romeo cries, "I am fortune's fool!" after he has killed Tybalt in the street fight.
- George continuously promises Lennie "rabbits, and a piece of land we can call our own," to motivate and inspire his friend.

Generally, stay away from long quotations. When a long quotation is absolutely essential (in a formal, extended paper), it should be set off from the text. It's still important to introduce the quotation. Usually "set off" text is preceded by a colon:

George Orwell had a difficult time acting as a police officer in Lower Burma. As demonstrated in the following excerpt from (title of "essay,") he was frustrated by his conflicting need to maintain law and order while remaining faithful to the idea that the Burmese had the right to be free:

All this was perplexing and upsetting. For at that time I had already made up my mind that imperialism was an evil thing and the sooner I chucked up my job and got out of it the Better. Theoretically--and secretly, of course--I was all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British.

Notice when quotations are set off from text they do not require quotation marks. Indent each line of the quote 10 spaces from the left margin (15 when starting a new paragraph). Right margin remains the same as the body of the paper. Spacing is the same as the body of the paper.

All quotations must be tied to text! Do not simply sprinkle them in like confetti. Work them in smoothly. Smooth integration is the mark of a mature writer and makes a paper flow.

This quotations handout is adapted from a handout by Michelle Garbis of Stoneham Douglas High School in Florida, 2003.

AP Lit Essay Scoring

The 100/100 paper will include the following:

- Thesis statement. Thesis is complex yet clear, addressing the prompt. Presents your essay's argument and three areas of support.
- Ideas. Answers the prompt fully, addressing the question with insight and analysis. Goes way beyond what has already been said in class. Remarks transcend the obvious and accurately identify the author's purpose, tone, and techniques. Picks up on the subtleties of the author's language, connecting these observations to the argument (the author's purpose).
- Organization. Three clear areas of support (body paragraphs) that address the author's techniques. Ideas are easy to follow, in a logical progression, with each paragraph framed by a topic sentence. Structure includes an introduction and a conclusion.
- Evidence. Analysis is supported by evidence (quotes, examples), worked in smoothly. Evidence is linked to your thesis, with a thorough explanation of how that evidence supports the argument (typically, what the author's tone or purpose is).
- Free of errors in grammar, spelling and mechanics. Writing is formal and follows the standard conventions of academic written English.

Try not to worry yourself too much about the empty space in this area.

Plagiarism: ZERO TOLERANCE

Plagiarizing any portion of your work is academic dishonesty. Any assignment you turn in that is not *one-hundred percent your own work* will result in the following consequences:

1. Zero on entire assignment.
2. Parents contacted.
3. Administrative referral.

THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS, AND THIS IS YOUR NOTIFICATION THAT THERE WILL BE NO SECOND CHANCES. IF YOU GET CAUGHT, THERE WILL BE NO OPPORTUNITY TO RE-DO THE ASSIGNMENT.

No excuse is acceptable, including:

- “I didn’t mean to.”
- “I was confused/didn’t understand.”
- “But I changed some of the words around.”
- “I didn’t know it was wrong.”
- “I’ve been really stressed out and didn’t have time.”
- “My hand accidentally slipped on the right-click button, and then I sneezed and dragged the online passage to my own paper. At that point there was an earthquake, which caused me to right-click again and paste it onto my own paper. I then changed some of the words around by mistake, but I didn’t realize.”

Academic dishonesty damages your grade and your reputation.

What about sparknotes and online summaries?

Online summaries are shortcuts, and poor substitutes for actually reading. They are terribly written and often inaccurate. Online sources will not help you on the reading quizzes and tests. If you are confused when you read, it may be because you have been relying for too long on sparknotes, which are at a fifth-grade reading level. Devote the time and integrity to your assignments, and take pride in your work.

Quick Overview of Essay Structure

1. Introduction

- Interesting opening
- Background, titles, authors
- Introduction of paper's philosophical concepts
- Thesis statement

2. Body Paragraph

- Topic sentence naming argument and area of support
- Evidence with explanations
- Several sentences linking back to the author's purpose and your thesis

3. Body Paragraph

4. Body Paragraph

5. Conclusion

- Rephrase argument in a fresh new way
- How is our understanding/appreciation enhanced by looking at it this way?
- Big picture—universals!
- Get philosophical

Helpful Verbs for Literary Analysis

Always strive for active voice and present tense when analyzing a short story, a novel, a passage from a novel, an essay, a play, or a poem. Avoid “shows.” A writer doesn’t “discuss” the subject, but explores them in specific ways. Choose active, sophisticated verbs. Notice the sophistication, liveliness, and specificity of the phrases below.

The writer...

1. asserts that wisdom resides in simplicity
2. creates a world where robots
3. reconstructs his father’s memories
4. relives the adventures of his youth
5. traces the boy’s family history
6. tracks the evil results of greed
7. probes the innate cruelty of human nature
8. explores the insidious ways in which one lie leads to legions
9. criticizes negligent parents
10. blames fate for his brother’s illness
11. accuses society of apathy and selfishness
12. attacks the authority figures
13. argues the merits of honest humiliation
14. establishes a mood of dissatisfied sarcasm
15. presents a childhood story
16. evokes nostalgia for the irrevocable past
17. seeks to explain the inexplicable
18. believes all people yearn for significance
19. laments that people too often succumb to despair
20. suggests that all families have secrets
21. considers the historical period
22. examines the idealism of youth
23. exposes the hypocrisy of the self-righteous
24. concentrates on motives behind decisions
25. reflects on a long walk in the woods
26. recalls a time when Americans relied on
27. reminisces about his grandfather’s fiddle
28. commiserates with anxious families of soldiers
29. recreates the blurred landscape of a blind man
30. depicts the hardships of the Depression
31. pleads for acceptance
32. appeals for understanding
33. expresses the pain of loss
34. confides her sense of guilt
35. rages against the materialistic rat race

- 36. questions conventional wisdom
- 37. marvels at nature's resilience
- 38. ignites the reader's imagination
- 39. implies that his despair stemmed from
- 40. chisels careful images of
disappointments
- 41. insists on facing mortality