

Class Discussion

What do you already know about writing essays?

- Thesis statement with claims in analytical paragraphs pointing to thesis
- Thesis should be argumentative, not factual (answers the questions “Why?” and/or “How?”, “The So-What Test”)
- Analytical paragraphs: claim, evidence, analysis
- No plot summary!
- Be concise, avoid “padding out” the essay with extraneous nonsense, avoid going off on tangents in the concluding paragraph
- Concluding paragraph restates thesis
- Integrate quotations properly

Writing Seminar 1



Appendix D1

- contains three sample paragraphs of an analytical essay:
 - an introductory paragraph
 - an analytical paragraph
 - a concluding paragraph

Writing About Literature

What Does It Involve?

- transcending a mere emotional response to the literary work
- interpreting and critically analysing the literary work
- reflecting on the larger meanings of the literary work
- communicating interpretations and critical analyses of the literary work persuasively

Who Is It For?

- people who believe literature expresses important ideas they want to know more about
- people who believe literature is complicated and want to learn about its various meanings
- people who are literate and have already read and thought about the work under consideration (Headrick 2-5)

Essays and Analytical Essays

What Is an Essay?

- a type of *expository* writing:
 - “serving to clarify, to set forth, or to explain in detail”
- requires:
 - a strong thesis statement
 - evidence supporting thesis
 - persuasive analysis of thesis
- three main types:
 - explication
 - analysis
 - comparison and contrast

What Is an Analytical Essay?

- *analysis*: from the Greek *analyein*
 - “to break up”
- thus, an analytical essay:
 - separates something into its component parts in order to understand the whole
 - breaks the work into various parts and then selects one part for close examination
 - is structured in such a way to facilitate this process of separation and examination

Essay Structure

introductory paragraph	attention-getting remark
	contextualizing information
	thesis statement
analytical paragraphs	claim
	evidence
	analysis
concluding paragraph	thesis statement
	contextualizing information
	attention-getting remark

- most analytical essays contain three components, each of which contains its own three components
- analytical essays are thus highly structured rhetorically
 - each component has a specific role to play
- be sure your analytical essays contain all of these components, in this order

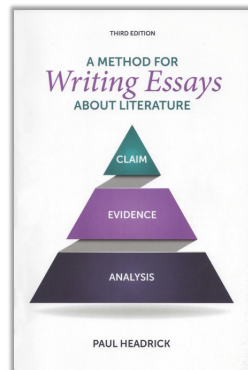
Essay Structure

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- the heart of the analytical essay, sometimes called the *body*
- develops a *claim*, a single idea about part of a literary text
- supports that idea with *evidence*, usually in the form of quotations
- connects the *claim* and the *evidence* with *analysis*
- consists of a sequence of paragraphs that forms the logical argument of the essay, in support of a central argument or *thesis* (Headrick 7)

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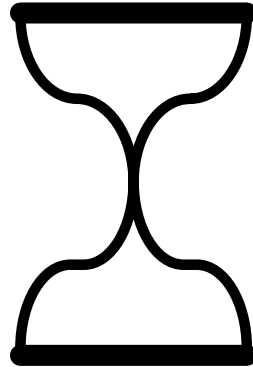
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- the *introductory paragraph* (the first paragraph) and the *concluding paragraph* (the final paragraph) mirror each other
- they both articulate the most important part of the essay: the *thesis*
- think of these paragraphs as the symmetrical top and bottom sections of an hourglass
 - **introduction**: broad to narrow
 - **conclusion**: narrow to broad

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	attention-getting remark

- states what the *analytical paragraph* is going to prove
 - the *topic sentence*, the first sentence in the paragraph
 - the “thesis” of the paragraph
- makes a point about something significant that is suggested or indirectly revealed by the text
 - goes beyond the obvious
 - does not just summarize plot
- uses verbs that lead to *analysis* “suggests,” “reveals,” etc.) (Headrick 8-10)

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- provides information that supports the *claim*
 - usually in the form of long, short, direct, and/or indirect quotations
- consists only of passages that you will go on to analyse
 - clearly supports the *claim*, with nothing extraneous
- is separate and distinct from the *claim* and the *analysis*
 - avoid mixing *evidence* and *analysis* (Headrick 11)

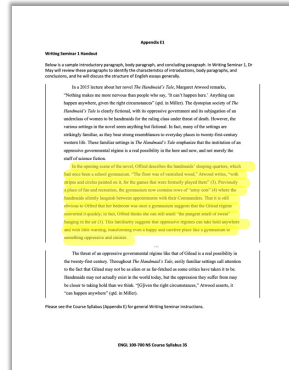
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- explains how the *evidence* supports the *claim*
 - shows how the two are connected
- repeats key terms from the *claim*
 - helps promote clarity
- develops the *claim*
 - does not just repeat the *claim*
- refers directly to the *evidence*
 - pinpoints the salient parts or aspects of the *evidence* (Headrick 12-13)

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Essay Structure

[claim] The narrator’s reaction to the room suggests that she has been affected by her husband’s attitude towards her, but she resists that attitude.

[evidence] She guesses at the history of the room: “It was nursery first and then playroom ... I should judge; for the windows are barred for little children, and there are rings and things in the walls” (131). **[1]** She also notes that the wallpaper has been stripped from portions of the walls, that the floor has been “scratched” (134), and that the bed, it seems, has been nailed down (134). **[2]** **[analysis]** These descriptions suggest a high degree of security **[1]** and also desperation in the room’s former occupants. **[2]** They hint that the room was likelier to have been an asylum of some sort than a nursery, especially given the narrator’s earlier observation that the house is isolated and its grounds secured (130-31). **[1, 2]** The narrator’s sense that the room was used for children, therefore, shows that she has been affected by her husband’s attitude, and expects that the place she will be assigned will be that of a child. **[1, 2]** **[evidence]** At the same time, however, she says, “I don’t like our room a bit” (131). **[3]** **[analysis]** Her resistance to the room shows that she resists her husband’s effort to reduce her to a child. **[3]** (Headrick 16-17, 133)

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- **opening statement**
 - should identify:
 - the text
 - the author
 - one (or perhaps two) of its abstract topics (Headrick 48-49)
- should draw the reader in, make them interested in the topic, prompt them to read further

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- **evidence preview**
 - should state what evidence the essay will analyse
 - should be brief
 - should avoid quoting evidence directly
- **links between evidence and thesis**
 - should articulate the connection between the evidence the essay will focus on and the theme that will be identified in the thesis (Headrick 48-49)

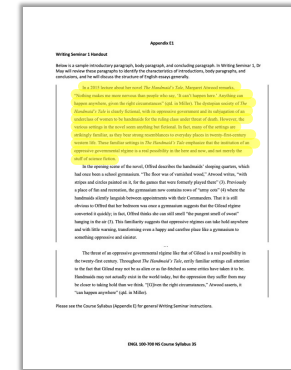
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- a single sentence that clearly and concisely indicates the central argument of the essay
- not the same thing as a topic:
 - must be argumentative
 - must take a clear position on some significant issue
 - must answer the questions “Why?” and/or “How?,” and not just “What?”
- characterized by all four of “the Four S’s”: significant, single, specific, and supportable

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- **summary**
 - briefly restates the essay’s *thesis*
 - uses different phraseology from that in the *introductory paragraph* (Headrick 52-53)
- provides an extra shade of meaning to the thesis to help explain it to the reader more comprehensively

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- **acknowledgement of limitation**
 - may include an acknowledgement of the limitations of your *analysis*
 - rationale: it is not possible in a single essay to consider all of the implications of the text, or all of the *evidence* (Headrick 52-53)
- for this course, it is preferable simply to review the essay’s sub-arguments (as articulated in the preceding analytical paragraphs)

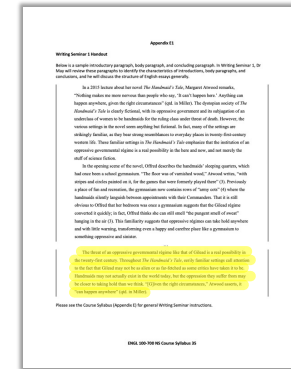
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- **new possibility**
 - may suggest a topic or focus of analysis that the essay has not covered but which it might raise in the minds of the reader
 - avoids going off topic by introducing new *evidence* or presenting new *analysis* (Headrick 52-53)
- for this course, it is preferable simply to provide a simple, final sentence that provides closure for the reader

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For More Information

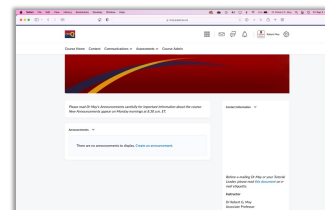
Dr May's Class Web Site
<https://www.queensu.ca/academia/drrgmay/documents/>

- "Essay Writing Notes"
- "Integrating Quotations"

The Purdue Online Writing Lab
<https://owl.purdue.edu/>

- **Essay Writing:** General Writing > Academic Writing > Essay Writing
- **Argumentative Essays:** General Writing > Academic Writing > Essay Writing > Argumentative Essays
- **Paragraphs and Paragraphing:** General Writing > Academic Writing > Paragraphs and Paragraphing
- **Writing About Fiction:** Subject-Specific Writing > Writing in Literature > Writing About Fiction

onQ Quiz 1



<https://onq.queensu.ca>

- test your knowledge of Writing Seminar 1 by writing onQ Quiz 1
- access the Quiz on onQ (under "Assessments" > "Quizzes")
- the onQ Quiz consists of a series of multiple-choice questions
- the suggested due date for this onQ Quiz is this Friday, but you may complete it anytime this term
- this onQ Quiz is worth 2% of your final grade

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