

***Romeo and Juliet* Essay**

Texts may be analyzed and interpreted in many ways. Shakespearean works are no different in that they have been subject to various types of investigation and analysis. Indeed, entire courses and even university degrees have been dedicated to analyzing the works of “The Bard”. In doing your culminating activity you will join the legions of scholars and students that have analyzed, interpreted and enjoyed his works. You will do the following.

In the literary essay, you are exploring the meaning and construction of a piece of literature. It is an insightful, critical interpretation of a literary work. It is not a summary of character, plot or other element of fiction. It is your interpretation and opinion. You must adopt a viewpoint on the work in question and show how the details of the work support your viewpoint.

You will write an essay based on one of the following topics.

- Romeo and Juliet are referred to as "star-cross'd lovers". Discuss the concept of fate and how it relates to the play.
- Who is responsible for the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet? Friar Laurence? The two lovers themselves? Their parents? Fate? Do a number of people share the blame? To what extent can these people be held responsible for the deaths of Romeo and Juliet?
- How does the idea of identity contribute to the story of Romeo and Juliet? Consider family affiliation, gender, social class and age in your response.
- Shakespeare was the master of figurative language. Consider how the use of metaphor, simile, hyperbole and/or personification contributes to the meaning of one of the play’s longer speeches. Analyze the speech and explain its figurative language.
- The play is full of contrasting images of light and darkness. Juliet invokes the night so she and Romeo can consummate their marriage (3.2). Benvolio says Romeo’s love is “blind” and “best befits the dark” (2.2.35). At the same time, characters frequently speak of the sun and moon and the sparkle of eyes. How do the various images of light and darkness throughout the play help us understand its theme?

Here are some helpful hints to improve your mark:

- Use all steps of the writing process: brainstorm, analyze and organize, draft and revise, and finalize using MLA manuscript format.
- Complete the writing process in order. There is no point in writing the essay and faking rough notes after the fact.
- Hand in all steps of the writing process.
- Use the outline as provided as part of the organization process of your essay. The outline is meant to help you organize your thoughts and structure your paper.
- Include evidence from the play to support your points. Opinions are weak without support to back them up. Use specific quotations to support your ideas.

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Introductory paragraph outline

General statement about the topic that grabs the reader's attention

Something general that relates to the topic of the essay.

Something more specific to your topic that leads to the thesis.

Thesis statement with three supporting points

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Body Paragraph Organizer (Body 1)

T (First thesis topic)

E (Point of support)

E (Proof: example/quote)

E (Link: explanation and analysis of example/quote with link to thesis point)

E (Point of support)

E (Proof: example/quote)

E (Link: explanation and analysis of example/quote with link to thesis point)

C (Link to thesis)

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Body Paragraph Organizer (Body 2)

T (Second thesis topic)

E (Point of support)

E (Proof: example/quote)

E (Link: explanation and analysis of example/quote with link to thesis point)

E (Point of support)

E (Proof: example/quote)

E (Link: explanation and analysis of example/quote with link to thesis point)

C (Link to thesis)

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Body Paragraph Organizer (Body 3)

T (Second thesis topic)

E (Point of support)

E (Proof: example/quote)

E (Link: explanation and analysis of example/quote with link to thesis point)

E (Point of support)

E (Proof: example/quote)

E (Link: explanation and analysis of example/quote with link to thesis point)

C (Link to thesis)

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Concluding paragraph outline

Restatement of Thesis:

Explain the relevance of the topic in relation to how one might view the work

Draw a broad conclusion from what you have written

ESSAY MARKING SCHEME**Overall Format and Writing Conventions**

Does the essay demonstrate fluency through varying sentence type, structure, and length for different purposes and make logical transitions between ideas by using signal/transition words and phrases?

4	8	12	16	20
(Not at all)	(Barely)	(Somewhat)	(Mostly)	(Completely)

Is the essay clearly written and free of errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar?

2	4	6	8	10
(Not at all)	(Barely)	(Somewhat)	(Mostly)	(Completely)

Does the essay follow the prescribed manuscript format (MLA or APA)?

1	2	3	4	5
(Not at all)	(Barely)	(Somewhat)	(Mostly)	(Completely)

Introductory Paragraph

Does the introductory paragraph open with a creative and relevant statement and follow with statements that introduce the thesis in a logical way?

1	2	3	4	5
(Not at all)	(Barely)	(Somewhat)	(Mostly)	(Completely)

Does the thesis clearly identify and outline the subject?

1	2	3	4	5
(Not at all)	(Barely)	(Somewhat)	(Mostly)	(Completely)

Body Paragraphs

Do the paragraphs have supporting details and examples to back up the topic/ main idea that are relevant and sufficient?

2	4	6	8	10
(Not at all)	(Barely)	(Somewhat)	(Mostly)	(Completely)

Do the paragraphs demonstrate evidence of insightful and thorough analysis of the points outlined in the thesis and a thorough understanding of the topic through detailed explanations and linking?

4	8	12	16	20
(Not at all)	(Barely)	(Somewhat)	(Mostly)	(Completely)

Concluding Paragraph

Does the concluding paragraph begin with a creative restatement of the thesis?

1	2	3	4	5
(Not at all)	(Barely)	(Somewhat)	(Mostly)	(Completely)

Does the conclusion leave the audience thinking about the topic in a creative and thought provoking manner?

1	2	3	4	5
(Not at all)	(Barely)	(Somewhat)	(Mostly)	(Completely)

Process

Does the rough work demonstrate evidence of the writing process (organizing using graphic organizers, creating drafts, proofreading, editing and revising)?

1	2	3	4	5
(Not at all)	(Barely)	(Somewhat)	(Mostly)	(Completely)

Were all of the process due dates adhered to?

1	2	3	4	5
(Not at all)	(Barely)	(Somewhat)	(Mostly)	(Completely)

_____/95

Comments: