***focus on this Essay # 1 (literary analysis)Description:***

In this essay, you are going to analyze an issue/aspect (of your choice) in one of the texts we have discussed so far (you can choose between Yeats’s Cathleen ní Houlihan, Synge’s Playboy of the Western World, Joyce’s “The Dead,” and A Portrait). Your chosen issue/aspect should be literary, political or historical. Note that while this is not a research essay (i.e. you do not have to look up literary criticism on these authors), you do have to demonstrate accurate knowledge and awareness of relevant social, political and cultural contexts (for example, the Celtic Revival, Ireland’s struggle for independence etc.). In order to find outside sources on these contextual issues, you need to use appropriate sources: i.e. no Wikipedia, Schmoop.com etc. Sage Knowledge or Cambridge Companions Online would be the best databases for this kind of information. This essay is not a plot summary: rather than give a broad description of the novel, you have to choose a narrower point. For example, you could concentrate on the function of bird imagery in A Portrait or the function of gender in Yeats’s Cathleen ní Houlihan. This means that you need to develop a theory about the role that bird imagery plays in Joyce’s novel. Your thesis statement should succinctly and convincingly present your theory. Also, you need to back up your claims (e.g. about the function of bird imagery or gender) with evidence (quotations) from the novel/ play. Please do not focus on a single character: invariably, these types of essays become summaries of the chosen character. Ideally, this essay would be an in-depth investigation of a topic of your choice in which you demonstrate both your analytical and close reading skills. Length, citation format etc.: 5 pages, MLA

***Expectations***:

A strong essay• “hooks” the audience with its opening and leaves them thinking with its closing• has a strong thesis that conveys the gist of your argument. Although this is an analysis, you’re still putting forward an argument. In other words, you cannot “just analyze” without putting forward a strong central point• includes textual evidence (quotations from the text) to strengthen your claims• employs transitions that will help the reader to follow the logic of your argument• avoids being descriptive. Do not summarize the play/novel: you need to formulate your own theory about the text! When you have a specific goal in mind, it is easier to avoid simply describing the play/novel/ short story.

***Documentation***

A) When Should You Cite a Source? There are a few basic rules of thumb you can use to judge whether you need to cite a source. If you quote an author, even if you are only borrowing a single key word, you need to tell your reader the origin of the quotation. You also need to cite a source if you restate an idea, thesis, or opinion stated by an author. Suppose, for instance, I am writing a philosophy essay on morality and gender and I mention Carol Gilligan’s theory that girls and boys learn to make different choices in situations of moral conflict. If I use the phrase “ethic of care” (Gilligan 30) to name Gilligan’s theory about women’s morality, I should clearly indicate where I found that term; but even if I don’t use any of Gilligan’s language and simply restate one of her ideas, I must tell the reader where I found that idea (Gilligan 16-23). Restating an expert’s theory or opinion is one form of what is called paraphrasing. Sometimes paraphrasing is much more extensive than simply putting an important concept into your own words; there are times, for example, when you may find it necessary to summarize information from another text to use as support for your own argument. If you are writing about conflicting theories concerning the cause of the Great Depression, for instance, you might find it necessary to restate concisely the opinions of several historians before you go on to make your own argument. Any information that you summarize must be carefully cited so that a reader can go and check the information in its original source. As you summarize, you should also be sure that you are putting the ideas into your own words. If you borrow a key word or phrase here and there, those should be put in quotation marks. You also need to document a source if you use facts that are not common knowledge. If you are writing a paper about the writer Edith Wharton, you may want to include information about her life and the publication of her works. Now every biography of Wharton will give basic dates of importance in her life, and you don’t need to cite sources for this sort of information. But every biographer also presents new facts and interpretations, and if you use information from Cynthia Griffin Wolff’s Feast of Words about Wharton’s relationship with her mother, then you need to tell your reader where you found that information.

B) The following paragraph offers a model of how attribution and documentation work when citing secondary sources in MLA format: In an essay on the structure of The Bluest Eye, Carl D. Malmgren offers a unique reading of the novel’s fragmented form. He first outlines the “multitextual” quality of the book, noting how Morrison relies upon two primary forms of narrative: the “four seasonal sections, narrated in the first person by Claudia MacTeer,” and the seven sections that open with epigraphs that mimic an elementary school primer (251). In turn, Malmgren argues that within individual sections Morrison also uses a “polyphonic” or “multivocal” style that further expands the shape of the novel. Claudia’s sections, for example, are “double voiced” due to the shifting between her viewpoints as a child and her later viewpoint as an adult, whereas the primer sections offer a third-person narrator as well as the first-person voices of characters such as Pauline, Soaphead Church, and eventually the “schizoid” voice of Pecola herself (252-253). However, Malmgren further proposes that the relationship between these multiple texts and voices is much closer than it might appear at first glance. For while these fragments appear to involve different narrators, Claudia herself may be seen as the narrator of the book as a whole: “I argue... that strong evidence, textual and biographical, exists to suggest that a single narrator, Claudia MacTeer, has composed the texts and created the voices and that my reading adds an important dimension to the meaning of the text” (254). For example, Claudia does not only serve as the storyteller in her own sections, but her language seems to echo or respond to the other narrative “voices” in the novel – whether in the case of Pauline or Soaphead’s first-person voice, or in the case of the third-person voice that portrays these secondary characters (254-256). By viewing Claudia as the creative consciousness of the novel, Malmgren’s reading helps to give greater coherence to its difficult shape. It also gives the reader more freedom to evaluate the book as a record of Claudia’s own development as an artist and as an adult, so that her personal growth balances the psychological destruction of Pecola.Attribution (or “signal phrases”): these phrases essentially cue the reader with regard to who is offering the arguments or ideas in the wording of a sentence (see underlined phrases above).Documentation: the parenthetical citation format – in this case, MLA – that helps readers to identify where certain quotations and paraphrases link back to the source (see the use of parentheses in the passage above).Attribution and documentation work together when citing sources in a paragraph, and should be used in these cases:1. Direct quotation – when you quote a source word for word2. Paraphrasing – when you restate the source’s words and ideas in your own language3. Summary – when you condense the overall argument of a source in a few sentences

***Developing a Thesis***

“So What?” How would you answer if someone asked you this question after reading your paper? Your thesis should answer this question. It doesn’t have to tell the reader everything the paper will say; it need only tell the most important thing. Think of your thesis as the one or two sentences you would save if you had to tear up the rest of the paper. These sentences will raise questions or create expectations in the reader about what the rest of the paper will say, but they don’t have to list all of those things.

Common thesis problems1. “The Grocery List” In Hemingway’s story “The Battler”, the main character, Nick, faces many kinds of “toughness.” Here are three examples of “toughness”....This thesis announces a topic without making an argument about why that topic is important; then it simply lists three examples without showing any connection between them.2. “So what?” In Hemingway’s story “The Battler”, Nick learns the price of being tough.”This statement makes a claim that could be argued, but it doesn’t say why it’s worth arguing in the first place. Why does it matter that Nick learns what it means to be tough? Why or how does he learn it?3. “The Big Top”In “The Battler”, Hemingway raises many questions about the role of social attitudes concerning “toughness” in men.This statement introduces a very broad topic without explaining how or why Hemingway “raises” these questions.Sentence Paradigm: What does a Thesis do?•Makes a claim that must be defended: “What is the author doing? Why is he doing it?”•Presents a conflict or opposing point of view.Although\_\_\_\_\_ (opposing view)\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (main clause)\_ because/by\_\_\_\_.•A thesis can develop over several sentences, showing connections between ideas.

Samples: 1) Although at first Nick admires “tough” people like Ad Francis, he realizes that traditional physical toughness can not always help one survive. Ultimately, physical toughness is not only useless without emotional toughness but also more damaging. Men who live only by their fists never learn how to survive emotional traumas. Hemingway illustrates this problem through the character of Ad Francis, the former boxer who could “take a punch in the ring,” but who goes “crazy” after his wife leaves him.2) In “The Battler”, Hemingway uses the contrasting light and dark imagery of a campfire in the woods at night to show Nick’s initiation into a world where traditional toughness can lead to “craziness.” Although at first the campfire seems to offer Nick a safe refuge from danger, he later learns the terrible price of too much physical toughness when he sees the misshapen face of Ad Francis, the former boxer, in the firelight, and hears the story of how he went “crazy