

Term Paper

- Criteria:**
- Must be argumentative, provide examples and explanation — include direct references from the novel, incorporate one-two secondary source(s).
 - Must have a clear beginning, middle, and end.
 - Use an outline and follow essay format (if comparing and contrasting use either the “slice” or “block” method).
- Format:** 5-7 pages (6 paragraphs minimum), double-spaced, typed, size 12 font, title page, and Works Cited page (bibliography — see teacher for format).

TOPICS:

Choose one of the topics below and write a term paper based on the independent novel you choose.

1. **Discuss theme.**
(*Tips:* Map the progression of the theme and how the author reveals his/her message).
2. **Discuss conflict.**
(*Tips:* Explore how the protagonist changes as a result of the conflict(s) he/she endures or explore how the conflict relates to/reveals the theme).
3. **Discuss the development of the protagonist.**
(*Tips:* Discuss in chronological order. Explore the protagonist’s journey to enlightenment/ the lesson he/she has learned. You may relate to conflict).
4. **Discuss the role of minor character(s) in relation to the protagonist.**
(*Tips:* What impact do they have on the protagonist? Do they add to the protagonist’s development? Link to conflict and theme. Minor characters may also be symbols).
5. **Explain how setting contributes to the novel.**
(*Tips:* Does it affect conflict?).
6. **Discuss the role of imagery in the novel.**
(*Tips:* How does the imagery enhance the theme?).
7. **Discuss symbolism in the novel.**
(*Tips:* How does the symbolism enhance or reveal the theme? How do symbols reveal the protagonist’s enlightenment or affect his or her journey/struggles).

8. **To what extent does culture affect the characters?**
(*Tips:* This can link to theme / conflict / characterization).
9. **How are the social attitudes of the novel's era reflected in the work?**
(*Tips:* Link to theme and conflict).
10. **What qualities of the novel make it unique? How do these qualities contribute overall to the novel?**
(*Tips:* Connect to theme).
11. **Explain why this novel is considered a significant work for its era.**
(*Tips:* What impact did it have then and now?).
12. **Compare and contrast two of the novel's characters.**
(*Tips:* What is the author's point of juxtaposing these characters?).
13. **Compare and contrast your novel and a film based on the book.**
(*Tips:* You must have a point! What impact do director changes have on the audience's interpretation of the story?).
14. **Compare and contrast your novel to any film reminiscent of this book.**
(*Tips:* You must have a point! How are the two related? Is the director able to effectively reveal theme? What is the positive/negative impact of the changes?
Example: *West Side Story* is reminiscent of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*).
15. **Discuss the use of contrast in the novel.**
(*Tips:* Connect to the theme. Explore differences in intellect, social standing, culture, etc. Look at the author's use of: light/dark, good/bad, rich/poor, male/female).

Argumentative Tactics

- Arrange points in order of increasing interest.
- *Remember*: each paragraph is a small argument.
- Present the opposition. Recognize that there are opposing arguments; but knock them flat. Get rid of the opposition first and then drive your point home.
- Balance “pros and cons”.

Hot Tips:

- Never hand in a final draft that you haven’t edited carefully with a pen in your hand. Correct all the little slips and typographic errors.
- Remember a good paragraph does three things:
 1. **It makes a point.**
 2. **It provides examples to prove or support the point.**
 3. **It argues that (2) does in fact, prove or support (1).**
- A good writer is always a good reader and critic of his/her own writing. Once you have finished the second draft, it is a good idea to forget about the paper for two days, then read it over. It will seem to you as if someone else wrote it, and many obvious corrections and adjustments will jump out at you. So, always put your essay under a rock for two days somewhere in the process of writing it; what the worms eat away wasn’t worth keeping anyway!
- When you write an essay, write down what you’re thinking right away. Have a brainstorming page; continue to generate thoughts.
- Ask yourself questions: why did you choose this topic? Do you have adequate ideas and information to discuss this topic (in a lengthy essay)?
- Look back at what you highlighted or where you put sticky-notes in your novel. Is this important to your essay topic (especially theme)?
- Come up with a thesis or hypothesis first. Remember, this is a “working thesis”. This means you can change it later if you need to.
- When you write, imagine that you are writing for dignitaries — elevate your tone, be formal. Choose your words carefully. Remember to “sell” your point. Write honestly, explore the truth, and make me believe you.
- Remember your audience. Think of your reader as skeptical. It is your job to present the evidence with support for your assertions.
- Use a thesaurus to vary your vocabulary, but be wary of big words you don’t understand.
- When you rewrite the paper, you improve clarity. You should write 3-4 drafts.

English Term Paper

A term paper is a research based essay. This means, that in addition to a close reading and discussion of your novel, you will be required to find and use secondary source material. This can be information from the library or the internet. A word of caution about the internet: anyone can publish work on the net. Just because it is there doesn't mean it is accurate. Also, record on an index card or note paper the exact internet site or library book. You will be expected to cite your resources on a "Works Cited" page (aka: a bibliography) at the end of your paper.

From Subject to Thesis: How to come up with a Thesis:

- Look for something that interests you.
- Your thesis is your essay's life and spirit.
- A good thesis focuses the reader's attention.

- When you have something to say about the subject then you have found your underlying idea. You have something to defend, something to fight about. Narrow your subject to a workable size (a one sentence thesis).

- The most dynamic thesis is a kind of an affront (insult) to someone.
- The stronger the "push" against convention, the stronger the thesis and the more energetic the essay.

The Basic Structure of your Paper:

The Beginning:

It has a clear introduction that sets forth the thesis and leads the reader into the subject. Think of this as a "funnel". It starts broad (general) and becomes narrow and specific.

The Middle:

It amplifies and fulfills. This is the body or bulk of the essay. It proves the assertion set out in the introduction. Each paragraph needs a topic sentence. Each topic sentence should link to the idea mentioned in the preceding paragraph. Use transition words. Make sure paragraphs are full and well-developed with plenty of details. Provide several examples and explain fully. (How does your example prove your point?).

The End:

It lets the reader know that you have arrived. Your final paragraph reasserts the main points and drives the point home. Think of this as the "inverted funnel" — the opposite of the introduction. The thought starts out moderately narrow; it is more or less the thesis you have been discussing throughout. Then, it pours out broader implications and finer emphasis. The end paragraph reiterates, summarizes and emphasizes.

Remember: Just like the essay, each paragraph has a beginning, middle, and end. The last sentence of each paragraph is the most emphatic (forceful).