

# THE WRITING BIBLE: LITERARY ANALYSIS

This is THE WORKSHEET. The one that you will come back to, time and time again, since this worksheet reveals the mysteries of the paragraph and the essay. In this worksheet, you will find logical explanations for why we write as we do and how to construct an argument that will overcome any objections from any dissenter. This is a worksheet that deserves a hallowed shrine in your binder ☺

## Topic vs. Argument vs. Thesis: A Conundrum Unraveled!

Topic	Argument	Thesis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One word/phrase</li> <li>- Universal</li> <li>- AKA: subject</li> <li>- Could have a number of topics per text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A complete sentence</li> <li>- Makes a CLAIM about a TOPIC</li> <li>- In a literary analysis paper, this is known as a THEME</li> <li>- Unifying/comprehensive</li> <li>- Controversial/arguable</li> <li>**This is your opinion, but not your preference**</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two sentences</li> <li>- First sentence: the argument sentence</li> <li>- Second sentence: the supporting claims sentence, where you hint to your readers which pieces of evidence you will be using to prove your argument</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Example:</b> love, family, friendship, integrity, hatred, racism</li> </ul> <p><i>(These are easy! There are tons of topics per text – but notice, we are not actually saying anything about these topics. We are being rather boring and just saying these topics exist. Don't worry, we get more interesting in the next box.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Example:</b> Love destroys personal identity.</li> </ul> <p><i>(What?!? Falling in love means that I will lose my own personal identity, that I will be forever subsumed (sweet word, means "taken over") by my love for another?!? Heck no, I will still be myself! ...Notice how this one is controversial – some people might agree, some might not. This means it is a good theme, since you now have the opportunity to prove how right you are to someone else!)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Example:</b> Mrs. Kloser, the author of <i>My Life: Lessons Learned from Love</i>, argues that love destroys personal identity. She shows this through Sarah's conversation with Hugh, Darcy's beliefs about her breakup with George and Constance's attitude towards marriage.</li> </ul> <p><i>(Gosh, this is delightful...I see an argument, then some hints towards the evidence that will be used to prove this. I can't say I agree, but I am for darn sure intrigued!)</i></p>

## The Thesis Statement: Stating your Case and Making an Argument

The thesis statement should be a statement of one or two sentences that provides the main, controlling idea of the essay. It is the *main argument that you, as an investigative scholar, are making about the text or the author's intentions*. The thesis should be the last sentence of your introduction.

Recap:

- Argumentative (an argument has two sides; prove yours!)
- Not obvious (shows insight/ a unique angle/ a spark/ not a summary of events)

Your thesis statement should be clear, concise, controversial, and unifying.

### Two Part Thesis Structure:

1. **The Argument Sentence:** \_\_\_\_\_, the author of \_\_\_\_\_, suggests/explores/ explains/portrays that \_\_\_\_\_ (argument) \_\_\_\_\_.
2. **The Supporting Claims Format:** He/She shows this through example/evidence 1, example/evidence 2....

\*If you have more than one supporting point, then use the same formula to list three points in parallel structure.

## **Paragraph Structure: How to argue with the greatest of ease and logic!**

(Terms: **Claim/Topic Sentence – Lead-in – Evidence/Support – Analysis**)

### Claim/Topic Sentence

- First sentence of a paragraph
- Should *introduce* (not give it all away) the topic, issue, or point of the paragraph.
- Needs to be linked to the appropriate supporting claim of the thesis (first supporting claim to first paragraph claim, etc.).
- Not totally about plot, not totally about thesis: should be both
- Should also be a statement that needs to be proven that you as a scholar will be proving in the paragraph.

#### **Claim/Topic Sentence Structure:**

**(Supporting claim) shows (argument from thesis).**

### Lead-in

This provides the context of the evidence/quotation that you will be utilizing for your paragraph.

Be sure to:

1. State who is saying the quotation and to whom they are speaking (narrator, speaker, or other character)
2. Provide the necessary context (set up the scene)
3. Situate the reader in the text: what do the readers need to know about your text in order to best understand your quotation?

### Evidence/Support

Evidence is the selection of *supporting examples or quotations* that is the information that proves the argument.

- In other words, it is the **textual evidence** you provide to show why/how your argument is true.
- Your evidence must **INTEGRATED** into a sentence: this means that no quote should stand on its own!
- Evidence should be specific examples from literature, quoted word for word from the text, including page number.
- If the quotation (sentence[s] from the book) is longer than four typed lines, indent and single space. In this class, you *should not* quote this much text!

#### **Proper Evidence Citation:**

**...end of quote” (Author last name page #).**

**Example: The character says, “I think that I need a small break” (Twain 49).**

### Analysis

The analysis is the most important and most complicated part of a paragraph. It is an *explanation of why the evidence is used to support the claim*. It offers a justification of why you chose the evidence you did. Your analysis should do three things:

1. Explain, analyze, or examine what the passage means using key words from the text to guide your reader.
2. Remind the reader of your essay’s main argument by showing how the quote supports your argument. Use key words from the claim and thesis in order to make this connection.