

LET'S GET TRADITIONAL!

AP Essay Review

INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH:

1. **Intro the author and the title of the work with proper formatting:**

Books: underline or *italics*

Poems: "Quotation Marks"

Short Stories: "Quotation Marks"

Plays: underline or *italics*

Epic/Long Poems: underline or *italics*

LONG WORKS: Underline and Italics

SHORTER WORKS: Quotation Marks

2. **Give your claim and thesis.** Maybe do some (very brief) opening discussion on theme, but you do not need a lead NOR do you need a lot of talk—just get to the point and stay focused on your big argument.

3. Use the **prompt wording**—it is okay to it! It is there gift to you and, more importantly, helps them see you are focused and answering the prompt.

EXAMPLES:

In William Golding's infamous novel, Lord of the Flies, readers are able to explore the concept of exile being an alienating and enriching experience. This is especially true for our main character, Ralph, who is sequestered on an island with a group of boys.

In this passage from Johnny Got His Gun, author Dalton Trumbo offers a touching account of a young boy's first step towards independence and manhood. His relationship with his father is characterized to be changing, while still remaining full of support and tradition that most readers can connect to. This outside perspective of a boy and his dad shows the reader that things can change at the same time that they remain the same.

THOUGHTS ABOUT INTRODUCTION:

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BODY PARAGRAPHS

1. Never lose focus of the prompt! This is called **good repetition**. I should constantly be reminded of the theme at hand (and trust me, each prompt boils down to a theme).
2. Repetition is strengthened by the **writing techniques and devices** you chose to focus on in each paragraph. You become redundant if you don't mix up the writing techniques. So if you discuss diction in the first body paragraph, don't bring up diction again—instead discuss syntax or juxtaposition. You also might need to chunk a couple writing techniques together, like diction and tone, especially if there is an overlap of ideas.
3. **CLOSING SENTENCES:** these gems are so easily forgotten in a body paragraph. It is easy to forget, but the closing sentence is YOU giving the LAST WORD and more importantly, connecting back to the main prompt—your claim—the analysis!

EXAMPLES:

In this passage from Johnny Got His Gun, author Dalton Trumbo offers a touching account of a young boy's first step towards independence and manhood. His relationship with his father is characterized to be changing, while still remaining full of support and tradition that most readers can connect to. This outside perspective of a boy and his dad shows the reader that things can change at the same time that they remain the same.

Trumbo chose to have an omniscient narrator—he is on the outside looking in. This point of view offers the reader a factual account with little character biased information. The reader feels as if they can trust the speaker when they tell them that "his father had always preferred his company" and "that [Joe] had always preferred his father's" as well—this father and son are very close. The narrator has no outside interest or underlying motivation in telling this facts, which makes the relationship between the two feel all the more genuine and candid.

Although this relationship is rooted in sincerity, there is no question that it is going through some changes. The selection of detail—particularly regarding the timeline—truly emphasizes this.

Ralph is elected leader of the boys—who have all been marooned on the island after a plane crash. With no adults present, Ralph takes a stand and attempts to form a democracy. He utilizes a conch shell to establish this system, but the shell is broken later on in the story by Jack and his tribe. This symbolizes the end of democracy and the start of Jack's dictatorship. By having Jack take over, Golding leaves Ralph alienated

This epiphany enriches Ralph and gives him the strength to stand up to Jack and not join in with evil. He stands strong in his beliefs and morals, acting like a true leader against all the odds and this pays off in the end.

THOUGHTS ABOUT BODY PARAGRAPHS:

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CONCLUSION

4. Say something new! It is very easy to get caught up in regurgitating the contents of the earlier part of the essay, but bring up one final analysis thought or conclusion that is slightly different or new. Think about the following:
- A. Title Analysis: Did you talk about the title? Reflecting on the title helps push a bigger meaning of the overall work.
 - B. Real World Connections: How could this piece of literature extend beyond the page into the bigger world.
 - C. Why did the author write this? What was their message? Theme? Lessons?
 - D. Be "punny" or play on a key line, quote, or theme.

EXAMPLES:

Helen of Troy's character is a powerful myth, a classic story that has lasted centuries. It is a tale worthy of praise and romanticism that Poe beautifully captures. But her history is also one worthy of critique, a history that can't be isolated as simply two lovers, for it impacted two of the largest nations—Greece and Troy. Her face casted off thousands of ships, but also equally cost thousands of lives. And it is that duality that makes her legend all the more interesting.

Dalton Trumbo shows the bittersweet reality of children who grew into teenagers. This moments of rejection always come. Teenagers will sometimes choose their friends over family, but it is a moment so much more complicated than most imagine. It impacts everyone—child and parent, but it can be a moment that is important for learning and growth.

THOUGHTS ABOUT CONCLUSION.