

Essay 2: Writing about the Novel *The Road*

Write a 4-6 page literary analysis argument essay in response to one of the prompts below. If you want to design your own topic, please get it approved by your instructor on or before the day the topic choice and preliminary research are due.

1. The man and the boy have frequent conflicts over the boy's desire to help others. What role does this tension play in the novel? Whom does the novel suggest is right?
2. The man tells the boy, "Your'e not the one who has to worry about everything," and the boy replies, "Yes, I am, he said. I am the one" (259). In what way is the boy right?
3. Explain the following quote: "All things of grace and beauty such that one holds them to one's heart have a common provenance in pain" (54). Discuss how the quote relates to the novel as a whole and how its meaning is expressed throughout the novel.
4. The wife tells the man, "The one thing I can tell you is that you wont survive for yourself. I know because I would never have come this far. A person who had no one would be well advised to cobble together some passable ghost. Breathe it into being and coax it along with words of love. Offer it each phantom crumb and shield it from harm with your body" (57). What does she mean? Is she right? Explain how the novel supports or disproves her message.
5. Discuss the significance of dreams in *The Road*.
6. Discuss the significance of images of vision and blindness in *The Road*.
7. **Discuss the significance of religious imagery in *The Road*.**
8. Discuss *The Road* as an extended metaphor for the fears of parenthood.
9. Interpret *The Road* from the point of view of a school of criticism, such as the ecocritical or psychoanalytic school.

Minimum Criteria (to earn a C or higher):

- **Thesis statement.** This should be a statement that clearly offers some argument regarding an aspect the novel (avoid merely summarizing the plot). Your thesis should come near the end of the first or the second paragraph. Make sure to move beyond the "list thesis" (the listing of topics that will be discussed) with this essay.
- **Well organized argument** with . . .
 - o **Clear and logical paragraphing.** This includes how the ideas are divided into paragraphs, the order of the ideas, topic sentences and transitions. Each paragraph should focus on just one idea, and the line of thought should be easy for a reader to follow.
 - o **Supporting quotes** from the novel. These quotations should be properly integrated and cited, as discussed in the "Citation and Documentation" section of *The Norton Introduction to Literature*, pg. 1283-90, and in the sample research paper, pg. 1291-1302.
 - o **Analysis and interpretation** of specific evidence from the text, including your supporting quotes. Your essay should not consist of a plot summary. You can assume that the audience for your paper has read the novel but are not experts on the novel.
 - o **Correct MLA in-text citation and Works Cited page.** See the sample essays referenced above.
 - o **Support from at least two outside sources, specifically articles of literary**

criticism published in academic journals. These sources can be from one of the library databases, from Google Scholar or from reliable internet sites. **Reviews, summaries, and study guides are not acceptable sources.** These sources should also be correctly documented using MLA style in-text citations and a Works Cited page.

- **MLA Style document formatting.** See the sample student paper referenced above for how the heading, title, line spacing, and page numbering should be set up. Please use a 12-pt font and 1" margins.
- **Error Free sentences.** At this stage in your writing, your sentences should be free from errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Make sure you leave enough time to proofread for typos as well.

IGNORE THIS PART... I ALREADY DID IT. :)

Timeline

Essay topic and initial research proposal

Choose a topic and find two potential research sources that meet the above requirements. By _____, email your **topic choice** and the following information about **two potential sources** for your paper to your instructor -

(1) Title, (2) author, (3) publication source (name of magazine/journal/Web site, etc.), (4) a brief summary/description of the article, and (5) link to the source.

Prewriting to be completed before class and workshopped **in class** on _____:

1. Look over your outside sources and reread the essay prompt you have chosen. Brainstorm or free write for 7-10 minutes on the topic you have chosen.
2. Skim through the novel again to collect quotes and other examples to support your analysis – collect more evidence than you think you will need so you will have lots to choose from.
3. Review your sources. Choose a few passages or ideas you think you might use in your paper. Consider how you will use the source material (agree, disagree, etc.).
4. Study your list of evidence from the text along with your list of evidence from your sources. Look for trends, progressions, recurring ideas, dualities, and contradictions.
5. Define your subtopics (i.e. categories of your evidence) and sort your evidence into your subtopics. Not all of your evidence may fit into a subtopic – you can choose to leave that evidence out or, if it seems very important, create an appropriate subtopic that will cover your evidence.
6. Draft a thesis statement for your analysis.

Bring a reasonably complete typed, double-spaced (or at least readable!) **draft** of your essay to class on _____ for the peer review draft workshop.

Bring a printed copy of the final draft of your essay to class on _____ and upload it to Turnitin.com **before** class.