



Researched Literary Analysis Paper

Assignment Guide for ENGL 1302

LSC-University Park Library

Assignment

Contact a Librarian

Write a researched analysis paper, developing a narrowly-defined argumentative thesis that considers the relationship between theme and symbol in one of the provided literary works. The essay should address the following:

- Articulate the central theme of the story and develop a strong thesis statement about that theme.
- Identify the symbols in the story and discuss how they support and establish the theme. Explain how the symbols help to communicate the story's meaning, citing specific moments in the text.
- What does the story suggest about the relationship between theme and symbol in fiction?

Length: 5-7 (double-spaced) pages, including a Works Cited page. Use at least 3 outside critical sources from the LSC [Research Databases](#). Use [MLA](#) format.

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[LSC-UP Library Homepage](#)

Contact Your Instructor

Professor Izaguirre
Lori.Izaguirre@lonestar.edu

Getting Started

Select one literary work from the following options: "A Rose for Emily" by William Faulkner | "Greasy Lake" by T.C. Boyle | "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman | "The Rocking Horse Winner" by D.H. Lawrence | "Everyday Use" by Alice Walker | "A & P" by John Updike | "Two Kinds" by Amy Tan | *Trifles* by Susan Glaspell | *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen | *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller

<p>Theme – "the central or underlying meaning of a literary work" (Literature: Craft & Voice)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start by making a list of all the work's possible themes. • Determine which points seem most important; then formulate a single sentence in which you combine them. • Try to capture the work's essence in a single sentence. Remember your goal is to transcend a mere one-sentence plot summary. How can you clearly express the central theme in a few words? (Kennedy and Gioia 223)
<p>Symbol – "any object, image, character, or action that suggests meaning beyond the everyday literal level" (Literature: Craft & Voice)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider a symbolic object's relevance to the plot. What events, characters, and ideas are associated with it? • Ask yourself what the symbol means to the protagonist of your chosen piece of literature. • Remember: in literature, few symbols are hidden. As you read and reread a story, any real symbol will usually find you.



To access the databases & ebooks from off-campus, you will need to enter your 14-digit barcode (this is your library account number) from the back of your student ID.

Research Databases



Protip: use the Advanced Search features!

E.g., “[author name] AND [title of the work]” or “[title of the work] AND [theme]”

[Gale Virtual Reference Library](#) – Start with this reference database to read an overview of your short story, including a summary of themes, characters, plot & more. From the literature reference sets: *Short Stories for Students*, *Novels for Students*, *Poetry for Students*, and *Drama for Students*.

[Literature Resource Center](#) – Find literature criticism essays, author biographies, work overviews, and primary sources related to your short story; search by title of work or author name.

[JSTOR](#) – This database contains scholarly journal articles from many subject areas. Perform an ‘Advanced Search’, limiting your search to ‘Articles’, and choose an appropriate subject discipline to help focus your search results.

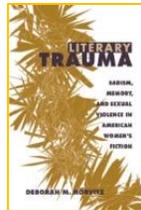
[Bloom's Literature](#) – Essays and criticism examining the lives of great authors and their works. Includes encyclopedia on literary themes.

Ebooks

[EBSCO eBook Collection](#)

If you want to download these ebooks or check them out, you will need to create a (free!) EBSCO account.

Otherwise, you can just read them online.



[Using Critical Theory : How to Read and Write About Literature](#) by Tyson. Critical analysis of *Death of a Salesman*, “A Rose for Emily, and “Everyday Use”

[Literary Trauma : Sadism, Memory, and Sexual Violence in American Women's Fiction](#) by Horvitz. Critical analysis of “The Yellow Wallpaper”

[Aesthetics in Feminist Perspective](#) by Hein & Korsmeyer. Critical analysis of “Everyday Use”

[Women in Literature : Reading Through the Lens of Gender](#) by Fisher & Silber. Critical Analysis of *Trifles*, *A Doll's House*, and *Death of a Salesman*

[Henrik Ibsen : A Doll's House](#) by Sidall. Critical Analysis of *A Doll's House*

[Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman](#) by Bloom. Critical Analysis of *Death of a Salesman*

MLA Citations



University Park library (12.800) has hard copy guides or you can use the [online MLA guide](#).

For more resources, visit our [Citation Help](#) page!

[Purdue OWL](#) – Highly recommended Online Writing Lab from Purdue University provides lots of citation and formatting guidance and examples.

Database Citation Tools – Most academic databases have a citation tool function. Ask us if you don't see the tool. Use it, but DO double-check any citations generated: they aren't guaranteed to be correct!

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