

## Contemporary American Fiction: Brainstorm & Outline for Essay #1 (2.5%)

You will complete this at home before the first day of writing your rough draft and hand it in with your rough draft.

### Part One: Freewrite

1. **Choose an essay topic. Compose a brainstorm/freewrite for it. Your brainstorm should be one page, double-spaced.**

In your brainstorm, **don't think about the quality of your ideas** and don't get stuck on anything. **Ask questions.** Talk about things you don't understand. If you get stuck, just write, "I don't know what to write over and over." Eventually, something will come to you. Basically, you want to write about any aspects of the story that this question makes you think of.

### Part Two: Outline

2. **Write a one-sentence "working" thesis statement.** Stick to the format for writing theses that we described in class. Remember to be specific and answer "how" and/or "why." Keep in mind that this is not the final thesis for your essay. This is meant to give you direction so you can begin your first draft.
3. **Choose twelve quotes from the novel (or references to specific events, with page numbers) that you feel will help you formulate your argument.** Choose quotes from different parts of the novel. Make a short note (one sentence) about what you might say about this quote, and how it might help push your argument forward. You don't need to copy the entire quote. **Write the context + first few words of quote + page number + notes**
  - *Example: Page 94: Lenny crying about Eunice on Noah's show. "what if Eunice and I just said 'no' to all this". Lenny wants something more genuine with Eunice*
4. **Group the quotes together into ones that you think express similar ideas.** Each group of quotes could become one paragraph.
5. Above each group of quotes, **write what you think the main idea of that paragraph could be.**
6. **By the end of this process, you should have a "working" outline** that should look something like this:
  - a. Top: Your working thesis statement
  - b. Para 1: Main idea of para (should be related to thesis)
    - i. List quotes and make notes on what you might say about them.
  - c. Para 2: Main idea of para (should be related to thesis)
    - i. List quotes and make notes on what you might say about them.
  - d. Para 3: Main idea of para (should be related to thesis)
    - i. List quotes and make notes on what you might say about them.
  - e. Para 4: Main idea of para (should be related to thesis)
    - i. List quotes and make notes on what you might say about them.

**You can do steps 3, 4, 5, and 6 simultaneously, if you wish.**

List as many paragraphs as you think you might have. **IT'S ALWAYS BETTER TO HAVE MORE MATERIAL THAN YOU NEED IN YOUR OUTLINE/DRAFTS.**