**LANGUAGE ARTS 10**

***The Crucible* Theme Analysis Paper**

**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

As a common district assessment, all 10th graders will write an essay analyzing a theme in Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible*.

**Assignment:**

* Analyze what Miller is trying to say about a “big idea” that you have chosen.
* Be sure to explain how you define the big idea you’ve chosen. You could also use an “official” definition from a dictionary, as long as you cite it correctly and include a Works Cited page for it.
* Use AT LEAST three quotations (total) from *The Crucible* in your body paragraphs. Remember to incorporate these correctly to avoid any “floating quotes.”
* You must have at least two body paragraphs but may have more.
* You will use MLA format for this paper. You will NOT need to include a Works Cited sheet (unless you use a source other than *The Crucible*), but you WILL need to use internal parenthetical documentation for direct quotes indicating the page number.
* The papers will likely be about 3 pages double spaced.

**How To Develop Your Thesis:**

* First, you will need to decide what you think Miller is showing about a “big idea”. In other words, what does the book show about that topic. While this is open to interpretation, remember that you will have to PROVE this is what the book shows! Also, remember that a thematic statement MUST…
  + Be a complete sentence
  + Be an original statement, NOT A CLICHÉ or a frequently used expression!
* If you have trouble with this, you may want to try the 5 Why process to explore your ideas and come up with the best statement.
* After you decide on the thematic statement, then you should write your thesis. Your thesis will include all or most of your thematic statement. (See the attached chart of theses that work and theses that don’t.)
* Before you write your entire paper, you will write an outline that you will turn in and I will grade to make sure you’re on the right track.

**Writing Your Paper:**

* You will be writing in a standard essay format/structure. This includes an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion.
* Make sure that each topic sentence uses key words from your thesis.
* Also make sure that in your body paragraphs, you thoroughly explain HOW an example develops your particular theme. It is NOT enough to simply quote something without a good explanation! (See example.)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Bad Thesis** | **Problem** | **Better Version\*** |
| The theme in *Puddin’head Wilson* is prejudice. | The theme in this thesis is not a STATEMENT. A theme cannot be one word. (Another bad version of this thesis would be, “Prejudice is shown in many ways in *Puddin’head Wilson*.”) | An important theme in *Puddin’head Wilson* is that suffering from prejudice will eventually affect a person’s self image. |
| There are many themes in *Puddin’head Wilson*.  *Or*  Prejudice and The Old South are both themes in *Puddin’head Wilson*. | You aren’t supposed to write about MANY themes. You are only supposed to show how ONE is developed. Plus, you must include your thematic statement in your thesis. | An important theme in *Puddin’head Wilson* is that suffering from prejudice will eventually affect a person’s self image. |
| In this paper, I will show how prejudice will eventually affect a person’s self-image is a theme in *Puddin’head Wilson* that is shown by Roxy, Tom, and Chambers. | Never write, “In this paper, I will show…” Don’t mention “this paper” in the actual paper—EVER. Also, avoid “I” unless you are writing about personal experience, which you shouldn’t do in this case.  Just SAY what you think! | An important theme in *Puddin’head Wilson* is that suffering from prejudice will eventually affect a person’s self image. |

Based on the GOOD thesis above, each topic sentence would mention the theme (your key words) and then a specific character or event that developed it. For example:

*One character whose self-image suffered due to prejudice is Roxy.*

You body paragraph then would include summaries of events and quotes that would show Roxy had a poor self-image with a thorough explanation of how prejudice caused it. For example:

One character whose self-image suffered due to prejudice is Roxy. At the beginning of the book, before she decides to switch Chambers and Tom, she contemplates committing suicide. *There is possibly no more obvious indication of a lack of self-worth than someone wanting to take her own life. And what drives Roxy to this personal low? Thinking that she and her son would be sent down river where they would be treated even more harshly by prejudiced slave owners. Had there been no prejudice in the South, Roxy not only would not be a slave, but she would not have been driven to this level of desperation.*

(underline = specific example; italics = explanation)

This paragraph is not finished! This is just ONE specific example with its explanation. Each body paragraph must have AT LEAST two specific examples!

**The 5 WHY Process (Optional for Brainstorming):**

* Start by writing down one of the big ideas of the book:
  + *People in the book suffer prejudice.* WHY?
* Next, ask yourself WHY? About this statement. Write down the best reason that comes to mind:
  + *Because other people feel superior to them*. WHY?
* Continue with this process 5 times—or even longer until you arrive at a DEEPER level of theme analysis than just the obvious:
  + *Because society has taught them to feel superior?* WHY?
  + *Because prejudiced ideas/institutions have been handed down from generation to generation.* WHY?
  + *Because people oppress others.* WHY?
  + *Because they are fearful of them or want to use them*.
  + **Possible Thematic Statement:** *Prejudice originates from fear.*
  + **Possible Thesis based on the thematic statement:** *In* Of Mice and Men*, characters suffer from prejudices caused by other characters’ fear. (Example)*

**LANGUAGE ARTS 10**

**COMMON ASSESSMENT OUTLINE FORM**

**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Directions: Complete this outline before you write your paper. **ALL BOLDED SECTIONS MUST BE IN COMPLETE SENTENCES!** If this form does not give you enough room, you may do this on a separate sheet of paper. You may add in more than two specific details per paragraph; you may have only two body paragraphs.

I. Introduction

A. Attention-getter:

**B. Thesis Statement:**

II. Body

1. **Topic Sentence 1:**
2. Fact/event/quote 1 and page #:
3. Fact/event/quote 2 and page #
4. **Topic Sentence 2:**
5. Fact/event/quote 1 and page #:
6. Fact/event/quote 2 and page #:
7. **Topic Sentence 3:**
8. Fact/event/quote 1 and page #:
9. Fact/event/quote 2 and page #:

III. Conclusion

1. **Restatement of thesis w/concluding transition:**
2. Link back to attention-getter: