Literature Based Expository Essay

In a literature based expository essay, you create a thesis or arguable statement about a piece of literature. Explain your thesis systematically by providing supporting evidence from the text. This kind of writing is different from a book report in that you assume that the reader has read the book and focus on very specific scenes or examples from the text. Follow the outline below.

Brainstorming

Trait 3 & Quote/Page:

Trait 1 & Quote/Page:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Character

Trait 2 & Quote/Page:

Literature Based Expository Essay Outline

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. **Hook/Lead:** Use a unique way to get the reader’s attention and introduce the focus of your paper.

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1. **Background Information:** Briefly summarize the plot, meaning, or focus of the text. Provide the author’s name and the title of the text in the introduction:

In the novel, The Glory Field, by Walter Dean Myers

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1. **Thesis & Subtopics:** The thesis must make an arguable statement about the literary text. It’s usually the last sentence in your first paragraph, but not always. The subtopics of your paper are the focus of each of the body paragraphs. You can list these separately, using a sentence for each one, or combine them with the thesis. The order in which you list them is the order in which you’ll discuss them. The following is a simple example of a combined thesis and subtopics:

There are several examples of pride shown through the actions and lives of the characters of Muhammad Bilal, Lizzy, and Tommy.

Thesis: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.\_(transition phrase)

Subtopics: 1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**II. BODY PARAGRAPH 1**

**A. Topic Sentence:** A transitional word or phrase begins the first sentence of each body paragraph. The topic sentence articulates the subtopic and how it supports the thesis.

(transition phrase) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**B. Quote Set Up:** Before you provide a supporting text quote, use one to three sentences to set up the context for the quote you’ve chosen. Describe the events leading up to the scene where the quote takes place.

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**C. Text Quote:** Select a text passage that supports this paragraph’s subtopic, and therefore your thesis. Directly quote the text, using quotation marks. Then, include a parenthetical reference to the page number of the quote. This is important so the reader can refer back to the text if needed. The following are examples of a text quote with parenthetical reference:

“He stalked the bunny rabbit down the worn forest path” (256).

“‘I saw him stalk the bunny down the path,’ Jane said” (256).

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**D. Analysis:** After the text quote, use two or three sentences to *explain* how this quote supports your thesis. Beginning the sentence with a verb phrase such as “This illustrates,” or “This demonstrates” clues in your reader that you’re beginning the analysis and showing the connection to the thesis.

(verb phrase) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**E. Conclusion:** At the end of the paragraph, make an inference or connection about the overall significance as it relates to the text. (This *may* have been thoroughly done in the analysis.)

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**III. BODY PARAGRAPH 2**

**A. Topic Sentence:** A transitional word or phrase begins the first sentence of each body paragraph. The topic sentence articulates the subtopic and how it supports the thesis.

(transition phrase) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**B. Quote Set Up:** Before you provide a supporting text quote, use one to three sentences to set up the context for the quote you’ve chosen. Describe the events leading up to the scene where the quote takes place.

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**C. Text Quote:** Select a text passage that supports this paragraph’s subtopic, and therefore your thesis. Directly quote the text, using quotation marks. Then, include a parenthetical reference to the page number of the quote. This is important so the reader can refer back to the text if needed. The following are examples of a text quote with parenthetical reference:

“He stalked the bunny rabbit down the worn forest path” (256).

“‘I saw him stalk the bunny down the path,’ Jane said” (256).

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**D. Analysis:** After the text quote, use two or three sentences to *explain* how this quote supports your thesis. Beginning the sentence with a verb phrase such as “This illustrates,” or “This demonstrates” clues in your reader that you’re beginning the analysis and showing the connection to the thesis.

(verb phrase) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**E. Conclusion:** At the end of the paragraph, make an inference or connection about the overall significance as it relates to the text. (This *may* have been thoroughly done in the analysis.)

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**IV. BODY PARAGRAPH 3**

**A. Topic Sentence:** A transitional word or phrase begins the first sentence of each body paragraph. The topic sentence articulates the subtopic and how it supports the thesis.

(transition phrase) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**B. Quote Set Up:** Before you provide a supporting text quote, use one to three sentences to set up the context for the quote you’ve chosen. Describe the events leading up to the scene where the quote takes place.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**C. Text Quote:** Select a text passage that supports this paragraph’s subtopic, and therefore your thesis. Directly quote the text, using quotation marks. Then, include a parenthetical reference to the page number of the quote. This is important so the reader can refer back to the text if needed. The following are examples of a text quote with parenthetical reference:

“He stalked the bunny rabbit down the worn forest path” (256).

“‘I saw him stalk the bunny down the path,’ Jane said” (256).

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**D. Analysis:** After the text quote, use two or three sentences to *explain* how this quote supports your thesis. Beginning the sentence with a verb phrase such as “This illustrates,” or “This demonstrates” clues in your reader that you’re beginning the analysis and showing the connection to the thesis.

(verb phrase) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**E. Conclusion:** At the end of the paragraph, make an inference or connection about the overall significance as it relates to the text. (This *may* have been thoroughly done in the analysis.)

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1. **CONCLUSION**
2. **Restate Thesis:** Use a transitional phrase to begin your concluding paragraph. The first sentence restates your thesis from the introductory paragraph. Avoid using the same wording you used in your introduction.

(transition phrase) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. **Review Subtopics:** Write one to three sentences that summarize the three main points from your body paragraphs.

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3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. **Concluding Thoughts:** The final part of your conclusion uses two to three sentences to state the larger significance of your thesis. For example: How does what you’ve examined in the essay and the text relate to the larger context of the world we live in? What’s the universal significance or larger lesson to be learned from the text and your essay?

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