

Writing Essay 2: An Analysis of a Short Story

Develop a Thesis:

- Remember that your thesis is a statement of a claim that is "arguable," meaning it's not a statement of pure fact that nobody could contest. An analytical essay takes a side and makes an argument. Imagine the paragraphs you will develop to support your thesis.
- Examine your notes and brainstorming lists to see what patterns/categories you can develop. Develop a thesis based on what you can develop in the strongest way.

Write your Introduction

Your introduction should begin by mentioning the title and author of your short story. Try to make your introduction engaging but not too overzealous. Avoid summarizing the assignment instructions. Also avoid summarizing the plot of the short story; assume your reader has read the story as well. Engage your reader by making statements about what you think is significant about the story, in general. State your thesis, generally as the last sentence in the first paragraph; the thesis should list the major points that will be developed in the body of the paper.

- Avoid filler and fluff. Don't start a paragraph with huge generalizations such as, "In modern society" or "Throughout time."
- Do not refer to the author of the short story by his or her first name only. Use the full name initially, and then later the last name. Omit titles (Mr. or Ms.).

Writing the Body Paragraphs

Each body paragraph should be like a paper in miniature—with an introductory sentence, a middle section containing evidence and quotations, then a concluding sentence that transitions to the next body paragraph.

Quoting must be exact (verbatim) and ADEQUATE. One or two quotes in a paragraph are insufficient. EACH quote should be introduced, with an independent clause followed by a colon. This introduction is your chance to tell why the quote is significant (thus, including analysis).

Quoting is a strong way to support your claim, as it presents the reader with the precise wording of the text you are analyzing.

Use MLA in-text citation format PRECISELY. After a quote from a short story OR an article, cite the author's last name and the **page** (Templeton 30). If you use the author's name in the introduction to the quote, then cite just the page (30). YOU SHOULD HAVE PAGE NUMBERS FOR ALL ARTICLES FOUND IN SCHOLARLY JOURNALS—DOWNLOAD THE .PDF FILES, WHICH WILL HAVE PAGE NUMBERING.

DO NOT cite lines or paragraphs after quoting from a short story. Cite pages in your text.

Do NOT refer to a short story as a “poem.”

Refer to authors/critics/various authorities by their names. Avoid the construction of “the author says” OR “it says” in your writing.

When secondary sources are used, you can quote them, but note the format for a quote within a source. In the example below, Templeton is our source, and she is quoting Weigand; further, the only source on the Works Cited is Templeton's:

Herman Weigand notes that Nora doesn't have the instinctual feelings of a “mother cat.” (quoted in Templeton 28).

Note that periods go AFTER citations, AND a quote within a quote goes in single quote marks:

Jane M. Healy, a noted educational psychologist, takes issue with “interactive” software for children, arguing that “some of the most popular ‘educational’ software . . . may be damaging to independent thinking, attention, and motivation.” (20).

Spelling argues that during the 1970s American automobile manufacturers met consumer needs “as well as could be expected” (26), but not everyone agrees with him.

Note how to block a long quotation (the following is from a play—hence the use of italics for the title—and notice that the quote is introduced, as well as followed with a comment):

In Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, the most poignant defense of Willie Loman comes from his wife, Linda:

He's not the finest character that ever lived. But he's a human being, and a terrible thing happened to him. So attention must be paid. He's not to be allowed to fall into his grave like an old dog. Attention, attention must finally be paid to such a person.

Indeed, as Miller's intent is to illustrate that "terrible thing" (56), Willie Loman becomes a universal symbol.

Refer properly to titles.

- Titles of articles should be in quote marks (with no italics): "Big Data on Campus," "Digital Media Ethics."
- Note the use of single quote marks (for a quote within a title or a title within a title): "Symbols in 'A Worn Path'"
- Titles of works that those articles appear in (journals) should be in italics: *The Explicator*, *The English Journal*, *English Studies*.
- Take care to copy the exact wording of titles.
- The title of your own paper should have NEITHER quote marks around it nor italics. However, if the title of the short story is inside your own title, it is referred to properly: An Analysis of "A Worn Path"
- The title of your paper should not be JUST the title of the story. Your paper's title should indicate what you are doing in your paper: Eudora Welty's Use of Irony in "A Worn Path"
- Avoid unoriginal titles like the following: Essay 2
- Commas and periods go BEFORE end quote marks.

Write your conclusion.

Your conclusion is where you remind your reader of how you supported your argument. This is also where you can show connections in thinking/ideas to larger concepts. This could mean stating how your argument affects other claims about the text, or how your claim could change the view of someone reading the text you analyzed. Always mention the title and author of the short story again in the conclusion, as a matter of form.

MLA Works Cited Page

1. A Works Cited page is REQUIRED.
2. You need two sources on this page—the short story AND the article you are using in your paper.
3. The Works Cited page is on the page that follows the last paragraph of your paper—so if your last paragraph is on page 3, the Works Cited would be on page 4.
4. Put the title (centered) at the top of the Works Cited page: Works Cited
5. Alphabetize the items in your Works Cited list.
6. EACH Works Cited entry should be formatted with a hanging indent.

MLA Format for an Article from a Scholarly Journal found in an HCCS Library Database:

Alonso, Alvaro, and Julio A. Camargo. “Toxicity of Nitrite to Three Species of Freshwater Invertebrates.” *Environmental Toxicology*, vol. 21, no. 1, 3 Feb. 2006, pp. 90-94. *Wiley Online Library*, doi: 10.1002/tox.20155. Accessed 27 May 2009.

Langhamer, Claire. “Love and Courtship in Mid-Twentieth-Century England.” *Historical Journal*, vol. 50, no. 1, 2007, pp. 173-96. *ProQuest*, doi:10.1017/S0018246X06005966. Accessed 27 May 2009.

Titles

Refer to titles correctly, using quotation marks or italics as required: *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic*, Dante’s *Inferno*, Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Shakespeare’s “Sonnet 130,” Donne’s “The Flea,” “Missing Fathers: *Twelfth Night* and the Reformation of Mourning.” Note that commas and periods go inside end quote marks.

Do NOT cut and paste from EasyBib (which often has errors) or from database reference lists. Also, *JSTOR* has title pages that are intended to give you information—however, that information is NOT to be cut-and-pasted into your paper.