

Literature Essay Three

Thesis

Pick a character or a narrator/speaker who makes an important **change** (for example, lives a completely differently lifestyle, makes a major decision, changes his/her mind in a major way, etc.) because of a specific **cause**—something he/she has learned or experienced (for example, seeing the consequences of his/her own actions or someone else's actions; learning something about himself/herself, about someone else, about the world; etc.). Identify a **point** that the literary work is making about this cause and change, paying attention to how both are described.

Your thesis/claim should:

- identify the **change** the character/narrator/speaker makes
- identify what **caused** him/her to make that change
- identify a **point** being made by the work about the change and cause.

Your evidence and argument should support all three points.

Feel free to choose an unexpected or controversial cause or point, as long as you have the textual evidence to support it.

For example, using a work that we did read in this course (there are arguments against this claim, but there is also evidence for it): “In *Pride and Prejudice*, Lizzie decides to marry Mr. Darcy because of the grandeur of his house and his importance in his community. One of the points the novel makes with this motivation is that Lizzie recognizes Darcy as an example of a man who uses his wealth and position for good when he is at home (although she first met him when he was being rude to people he didn't know).”

Works and Characters/Narrators/Speakers

You can draw on any work we've read from the Victorian Era. You can use major characters like Ebenezer Scrooge, Jane Eyre, Rochester, etc., or minor characters like Jacob Marley's ghost (what point is made by the Marley's reasons for thinking and acting differently as a ghost than he did as a man?) or Eliza Reed (what point is made by her reasons for becoming a nun?). You may find compelling cases in narrative poems like “Goblin Market” (both sisters' motives and decisions are significant) or “Karsish” (what point is made by Lazarus's or Karshish's motives and decisions?). Even more meditative poems often include decisions—why look at cherry blossoms in “Loveliest of trees, the cherry now,” and what is the point of a poem giving that motivation instead of a different motivation?

Structure

Please use the structure of a five-paragraph essay:

- One **introductory paragraph** that gives your **thesis**, with any background that is necessary to explain it.
- Three **body paragraphs**, each of which provides an argument supporting your thesis. Each paragraph should have a **topic sentence** (a kind of mini-thesis for the paragraph, which states the supporting argument of the paragraph), and **textual evidence** from the literary work—specific examples (details and quotations, with citations giving author/title and page/line numbers) that support the argument stated in the topic sentence.
- One **concluding paragraph** which transitions from a brief restatement of the thesis to a comment on the significance of your thesis—which, in a literature essay, means how it helps us better understand or interpret the literary work(s).