

Literature Essay Two

Works, Theme, and Thesis

Choose any author from the Romantic Era and analyze the author's depiction of authority in one or more works. Your **thesis** should answer the question: according to your chosen author, **what makes authority good or bad?**

You can draw on any figures depicted as authorities, such as father figures (like Frankenstein, Sir Thomas, or even Edmund), mother figures (like Lady Bertram or perhaps the mothers depicted by Wollstonecraft or Barbauld), political figures (like Sennacherib, Ozymandias, or Kubla Khan), religious figures (such as clergy), past authors (such as Shakespeare, Milton, Elizabeth Inchbald), etc.

General Guidelines about Your Thesis

You will write an interpretive essay, that is, an essay that attempts to **persuade your reader of your interpretation** of one or more literary works. Your interpretation is your assessment of the significance or meaning (**theme and message**) of the literary work(s), although your focus can be (and often will be) on only part of a work's meaning—one of the points it is making, not necessarily the main point it is making.

Articulate the **point the author is making** about this subject and make an **argument** with **evidence from the work(s)** that the author is making the point you say he or she is making.

Remember, it's not enough to discuss the theme in general; you want **a statement** (the point the author is making about the theme).

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).