**ENG4U – ISU Part D – Essay Topics**

**Choose one of the following essay prompts and apply it to the novel you have studied for your ISU. You may choose a separate topic only with my explicit approval! Write a formal literary essay of about 1500 words, including direct textual support for your thesis. You are encouraged to refer to and cite your literary criticisms. Use proper MLA style throughout your essay, including parenthetical citations, and attach a properly formatted bibliography. You are encouraged to discuss your possible ideas with me and your peers as you develop your thesis.**

1. With reference to a work you have studied in this course, to what extent does isolation (physical, emotional or societal) cause a character to evaluate his or her moral beliefs or personal convictions?
2. To what extent is a character's acquired self -knowledge essential to the resolution of a work? Justify your answer with reference to a work you have studied in this course.
3. Adversity is the most important factor in shaping character and/or identity. Assess the validity of this statement with reference to a work that you have studied in this course.
4. In a work you have studied in this course, debate to what degree chaos is the result of a character's struggle to re-order his or her world.
5. Referring to a work studied in this course, show how the author’s use of imagery and/or symbolism reveals significant aspects of a central character’s personality.
6. With reference to a work studied in this course, to what extent is a character’s courage or strength revealed through confrontation with a moral dilemma?
7. With reference to a work studied in this course, assess to what extent setting shapes or influences a central character.
8. Show that a character’s inability to escape the difficulties of his/her past contributes to the development of a theme in a work studied in this course.
9. In a work studied in this course, to what extent does a character develop while attempting to balance his/her ideals with the reality of the world in which he/she lives?
10. Those qualities that make a character heroic (or admirable or exceptional) may also cause his or her suffering or destruction. To what extent is this statement true of a character in a work you have studied in this course?
11. With reference to a work studied in this course, to what extent is a central character enlightened or changed by his/her main quest?
12. Show how the author’s use of imagery and/or symbolism reveals theme OR reinforces aspects of character in a work studied in this course.
13. To what extent does a character’s obsession lead to his/her success or failure in a work studied in this course?
14. To what extent is a character responsible for his/her isolation from society in a work studied in this course?
15. Show that a conflict based on morals or values is used to develop a central theme in a work studied in this course.
16. With reference to a work studied in this course, show that the author develops a central theme through a character who is unable to change his/her course of action.
17. With reference to a work studied in this course, justify the claim that a central theme is developed when a central character finds it impossible to achieve his/her aspirations in the circumstances in which he/she lives.
18. Evaluate the role of family in a character’s success or failure in a work studied in this course.
19. Assess how betrayal and/or treachery develop character AND theme in a work studied in this course.
20. With reference to a work studied in this course, analyse the contribution to the development of theme of THREE of the following literary techniques: imagery, symbolism, parallelism, irony, contrast, or point of view.
21. Assess how the changes in a character's personal convictions, OR a character's refusal to alter his/her personal convictions, contributes to the development of theme in a work studied in this course.
22. Analyse how the structure of a work studied in this course contributes to the development of a central theme.
23. To what extent do relationships contribute to the central character’s ultimate understanding of himself/herself in a work studied in this course?
24. To what extent does a central character’s struggle in a complex world reveal elements of human nature and/or the values of society in a work studied in this course?
25. Seeing a character's life as a journey in search of truth or meaning may help us to understand a central theme of the work. Apply this statement to a work that you have studied in this course and assess the degree to which this search is successful.
26. With reference to a work studied in this course, analyse how the reluctance of a central character to accept reality may lead to tragic consequences.
27. Conflict arises when a character's beliefs or desires are incompatible with the reality he or she faces. Judge how successfully an author expresses a central theme through the character's response to such a conflict.
28. A character’s downfall is the result of a combination of weakness and circumstance. Analyze the extent to which this statement is true with reference to a work studied in this course.
29. The setting of a novel or play is the background by which readers come to know and understand the characters and the author's ideas. For a work studied in this course, analyse the extent to which setting affects a character's actions and reveals a theme.
30. Love is one of the most significant forces in human nature, and how a person responds to love can reveal a great deal about him or her. Analyse the extent to which ONE character's experience with love contributes to the development of character and theme in a work studied in this course.
31. Analyse how the journey, whether literal or figurative, is employed to shape and / or reveal the protagonist's character in a work studied in this course.
32. Through sharp contrast, a character foil enhances certain traits of a central character. Analyse how a secondary character operates as a foil and is employed to develop theme in a work studied in this course.
33. With reference to a work you have studied in this course, analyse how a character's aspirations are thwarted by his or her imperfections.
34. Evaluate an author's use of humour to reinforce a central theme. Support your answer with detailed reference to a work you have studied in this course.
35. With reference to a work studied in this course, analyse how the structure of the work helps to convey its theme.
36. In a work you have studied in this course, to what extent does a secondary character (or secondary characters) amplify a major theme?
37. In studying literature, we sometimes become aware of ironies which suggest complexities in the human situation. Analyse the validity of this statement as it applies to a work that you have studied in this course.
38. In a work you have studied in this course, analyse how a central theme is expressed through a character's success or failure in reconciling incompatible aspects of his or her life.
39. In literature, imagery is used to amplify theme. Evaluate the validity of this statement with respect to a work you have studied in this course.
40. To struggle against great odds is the essence of real courage. Assess the extent to which this definition of courage applies to a character (or characters) in a work you have studied in this course.

Essay Rubric

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| **Categories** | **Level 1**  **(50-59%)** | **Level 2**  **(60-69%)** | **Level 3**  **(70-79%)** | **Level 4**  **(80-100%)** |
| **Knowledge & Understanding**  understanding, analysis, explanation of the writing task, themes, concepts, and ideas. | Demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of content | Demonstrates some knowledge and understanding of content | Demonstrates considerable knowledge and understanding of content | Demonstrates thorough knowledge and understanding of content |
| **Thinking**  Establishes a clear thesis, maintains direction, focus and coherence; considers perspectives of the reader, author, and context | Uses planning and processing skills with limited effectiveness | Uses planning and processing skills with some effectiveness | Uses planning and processing skills with considerable effectiveness | Uses planning and processing skills with a high degree of effectiveness |
| **Communication**  Extent to which ideas are elaborated using specific and relevant details and/or evidence to support the thesis; critical thinking skills are employed | Expresses, organizes, and communicates ideas with limited effectiveness | Expresses, organizes, and communicates ideas with some effectiveness | Expresses, organizes, and communicates ideas with considerable effectiveness | Expresses, organizes, and communicates ideas with a high degree of effectiveness |
| **Application**  Writing reveals proper MLA format, formal academic writing conventions: spelling, punctuation, grammar, paragraphing, capitalization, and word usage | Applies writing conventions and referencing with limited effectiveness | Applies writing conventions and referencing with some effectiveness | Applies writing conventions and referencing with considerable effectiveness | Applies writing conventions and referencing with a high degree of effectiveness |