

Critical Essays in Higher English

The Question

The first line of the question helps you choose whether your novel/poem/play is suitable for that question. The second line tells you what you need to write about in your essay.

Introduction

You must mention:

- The title and author's name
- A brief summary of what the novel/poem/play is about.
- A reference to the question you have been asked.

Main Paragraphs (4 or 5 PEAs)

POINT: a couple of sentences which relate to what the question is asking.

- 1) You must start with a topic sentence which explains clearly how your point answers the question.
- 2) Then go on to develop the point.

Points:

If the question asks about a character for whom we feel sympathy, you must think of 4 or 5 reasons or points in the play where we feel sorry for them. These will be your points and the focuses of your main paragraph.

E.g. The first point we feel sympathy for X is when... We see how much he has struggled to provide for his family and that what happens to them isn't his fault.

EVIDENCE:

- 1) Write one sentence about what's happening in the text at the point your quote came from.
- 2) QUOTE.

ANALYSIS:

- 1) Identify the techniques the writer has used in the quote.
- 2) Explain what they tell you about the characters and/or theme.
- 3) Link this analysis in with what the question is asking. Try to add an evaluative comment.

Techniques

PROSE: narration of the novel, setting, characterisation, key scenes, theme, symbolism, imagery, climax...

DRAMA: characterisation, theme, turning point, symbolism, structure, stage directions, monologue, soliloquy, climax, dramatic irony...

Conclusion

Refer again to title and author. Summarise the main points you have made in the essay - you'll need to refer back to the question for this.