

“Best of ...” Analysis Assignment

The Purpose:

By design, the “Best of” Assignment allows you to choose what you will analyze. As an AP Literature student, you must develop your skills of analysis in both quality and efficiency, but very often you are given the medium with very little input as to what the medium will be. By selecting your work, I am hopeful that you will feel more confident, have more control, and take more initiative in your learning. These attributes are the hallmarks of a good student. Developing these skills so that you begin to take more initiative naturally without being under the aegis of a scored assignment is the hallmark of a *great* student!

The Guidelines:

Select either a poem or short story from a collection (either pre-defined by the teacher or yourself), and invent and compose an analysis of the work. In your explication:

- You should introduce your paper with a very brief summary of the literary work (no more than 1 sentence – this is harder than you think) and then identify the poet or author’s attitude and thus argument regarding a theme that you divine from your close reading. This thesis statement (use the Thesis Building Worksheet to aid you in crafting a skillful thesis) is the pin around which your paper will hinge.
- Your analysis should focus on how the poet or author develops this argument within the work, supporting your reasoning with quotes and analysis. While you should use quotes from the work (MLA style), you may only use one (1) block quote, all others must be embedded in your writing. A

good rule of thumb is that all quoted material should not take up more than 1/3 of your paper (imagine highlighting all quotes to see how much space they take up). Using too many quotes without adequate analysis of each is a sign of a weak writer.

- You should end your work by tying all of your points back to your thesis in a strong and cogent conclusion. This conclusion must be relevant to your analysis of the work and the thesis that you designed based upon your understanding. You do want to create a big “A-ha!” moment, but avoid histrionics.

The Expectations:

- **FORMAL** MLA Format (please see the sample paper on the AP Literature Home Page on my website) – font, size, spacing, heading and headers, pagination, citations, etc.
- Properly cited and embedded quotes – go to Purdue University’s OWL site for more information and “how to”s.
- Clearly written and concise thesis statement (no more than one or two sentences) embedded in your introductory paragraph.
- 300-500 words **max** – This assignment, after the analysis that we have undertaken in class, should take you no more than 45 minutes to 1 hour to craft. Fine-tuning may take longer until your skills of formal writing improve. **DO** include your word count on the bottom left of your last analysis page (not Work Cited Page)
- MLA format Work Cited Page
- Uploaded to Turnitin.com by 11:59 pm on _____.