

Theme Analysis

Assignment Description:

For this assignment, you will analyze the theme of *one* of the following short stories:

1. “I Stand Here Ironing” by Tillie Olson
2. “The Cask of Amontillado” by Edger Allen Poe
3. “The Yellow Wallpaper” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman
4. “Everyday Use” by Alice Walker.
5. “A Rose for Emily” by William Faulkner
6. “To Build a Fire” by Jack London
7. “The Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin

Audience:

For this assignment, you will be writing to a scholarly audience; therefore, the tone of your paper should be formal. Also, you should assume that your audience is familiar with literary terms such as plot, theme, point of view, tone, character, etc. However, you should also assume that your audience is only vaguely familiar with your story – perhaps they read it once a few years ago, but they need to be reminded of some of the more intricate details of the story.

Requirements:

- Your essay must have an appropriate introduction, body, and conclusion.
 - Your introduction must include a brief summary of the plot and a “theme statement.”
 - Each body paragraph should include a topic sentence, textual evidence from the story, and explanations of the textual evidence.
 - Your conclusion should sum up your main ideas, reiterate your “theme statement,” and leave the reader with something to think about.
- Your essay needs to be as grammatically and mechanically correct as possible.
- Your essay should be typed in 12 pt. Times New Roman font, double spaced, with one inch margins.
- You should work on this on your own without consulting peers or outside sources. The only “source” you are allowed to use is the story itself. If you’re stuck, you are welcome to ask me questions during class, via text message, or via email.

Tips for Writing a Theme Analysis

- Make sure that you mention the title and author of your story in your introduction.
- Make sure that your “theme statement” refers to the theme, not some aspect of the plot. (Remember, the theme is usually a broad idea about life, human nature, society, etc.)
- Make sure that you consistently refer to the story in the present tense.
- Make sure you write a parenthetical page citation after each paraphrase, summary, or direct quote from the story.
- Make sure you explain each piece of textual evidence you use.
- Quotes that are more than 3 sentences long should be written in block quote format.
- Don’t just “drop” quotes into your essay; make sure you introduce them with some kind of context.