

### Dear Students,

In the upcoming session, we will learn how to write literary analysis essays. Starting with themes, we will discover how to identify the themes in a literary work, write a theme analysis essay, and support our analysis using various forms of illustrations. To help us have a clear idea about this form of writing, we use the essays below as samples. Different colors for the different parts of the essays are used to make it easier for us to follow.

- After this we will start our analysis of "The Hunger Artist" and "The Little Prince" As a warmup.

Below is a reminder of the essay structure.

## Essay Structure

### 1. The Introduction

**1.1. The Hook** is the opening sentence (s) of your essay; it captures the readers' attention and helps raise their interest in your topic. A hook can be, a question, a quote, a line from a poem, a short anecdote, a personal story, a fun fact, or a surprising fact, statistics, jokes, etc. that relate to your topic. The choice of the hook depends on the effect you want to achieve, the type of the essay, and the audience of your written piece. To reach a better effect, keep your hooks short. (Check essay samples below) Keep in mind that a hook opens the introduction; it does not stand for it. If you cannot come up with a good hook, in some cases, you can use your thesis statement at the beginning of the essay, which will serve both as a thesis statement and a catchy hook.

**1.2. The General Statements:** after writing your hook, you need to provide a few sentences that describe your topic and provide general information about it. These sentences link your hook to the thesis statement, which is the last part of the introduction.

### 1.3. The Thesis Statement

The last part of the introduction; is a sentence or two that name the topic and controls the ideas, or subdivisions of the topic that are going to be discussed in the body. It presents the topic and your position in relation to the topic. It guides your writing and keeps it focused. A thesis statement is neither too general nor too specific. It is clear, concise, and precise. Like the topic sentence, a thesis statement contains a controlling idea that indicates the pattern of organization of your essay. A reader should be able to expect what is the whole essay about when reading your thesis statement, and the order of the ideas

mentioned in your controlling idea should be followed when organizing your body paragraphs.

**2. The Body** is composed of one or more paragraphs depending on the topic being discussed, and sometimes in the question being asked. The number of paragraphs follows the thesis statement. It differs from one topic to another, from one question to another. All body paragraphs should be focused on one main point; the point should relate to the major focus of the essay. To write a good body, you need to follow a number of tips

**2.1.** If you have one body paragraph, make sure all the information you have mentioned in the thesis statement is covered in your supporting sentence.

**2.2.** If you have more than one body paragraph, make sure every paragraph has a topic sentence that relates to one of the ideas mentioned in your thesis statement.

**2.3.** Use the concluding sentence of each paragraph to hint at or introduce the next paragraph.

**2.4.** Try to keep a balance between the paragraphs of the body in terms of length and the number of ideas discussed in each.

**2.5.** Focus on the effective use of transition words within the same paragraph, and to move from one paragraph to another.

**3. The Conclusion:** In your conclusion, you can restate your thesis statement, summarize the main ideas from each paragraph, connect back to your introduction hook, provide a general comment on the topic, or do all of them together. It gives your final thoughts and words about the topic. Never mention an irrelevant or new idea in the conclusion.



## Sample Essay One: Theme of Culture Preservation and Identity in Things Fall Apart

Hook

Thesis statement

Topic sentence

Elaboration (commentary, events, explanations, examples, illustration, etc.)

Quotes from the text

Restatement of the introduction (TS)

Citations (critics and analysts)

### Introduction

"The writer in modern-day Africa has assumed the role of the conscience of the society, reminding readers and society of the high cultural ethos that must be upheld." (Ojaide, 1992: 44). Achebe believes in the political role of the writer and that art has the power to change things. In his novel, *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe offers an almost documentary account of the daily life, customs, ceremonies, and beliefs of the Igbo people without evasion or romanticizing. Tired of the misrepresentations of Africa and the Africans in the western canon, Achebe tries to portray western colonialism and Christianity confronting an animist tribal system in Nigeria in its full complexity. As to stress the theme of culture and identity, Achebe describes both the positive and the negative aspects of the Igbo people without romanticizing or sentimentalizing them.

### Body

Achebe wants to have his cultural heritage, the oral tradition, rituals, family, social life and religion in the records. According to Diana Akers Rhoads, in her essay "Culture in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*," "One of Achebe's aims is to present the peculiarities of the Igbo culture, especially the beauties and wisdom of its art and institutions, though...Achebe also presents its weaknesses which require change and which aid in its destruction. In Achebe's presentation, Igbo are a self-governing people. For big decisions, all Umuofia gathers together under the leadership of the *ndichie* (the elders) and during these meetings, everybody can speak his mind. They have developed a fairly democratic system of government where "a man was judged according to his worth and not according to the worth of his father." (11)

Igbo also have developed a well-established and effective justice system. When a member of their clan was killed by another clan, all the nine villages of Umuofia came together in the market place and decided to follow the normal procedure. "An ultimatum was immediately dispatched to Mbaino asking them to choose between war on the one hand, and on the other the offer of a young man and a virgin as compensation." (15) Everything seemed to work out in a harmonious manner as the people of Umuofia work together to settle the disputes among themselves or with other clans.

Another positive quality of the Igbo culture that Achebe emphasizes is the tolerance of other cultures. As opposed to the missionaries' comments like, "We have been sent by this great God to ask you to leave your wicked ways and false gods and turn to Him so that you may be saved when you die," he said. (135) or "Unless you shave off the mark of your heathen belief I will not admit you into the church" (147), "We shall not do you any harm," said the District Commissioner to them later, "if only you agree to cooperate with us" (177-8), we have the Igbo people saying "You can stay with us if you like our ways, you can worship your God. It is good that a man should worship the gods and spirits of

his fathers" (175) or "There is no story that is not true. The world has no end, and what is good among one people is an abomination with others" (130).

Achebe also emphasizes some negative aspects about the Igbo society. For instance, he shows that the missionaries have things to offer that are missing from the Igbo society: a government, trade, money, salvation of people, and above all schools. The white missionary, Mr. Brown says "that the leaders of the land in the future would be men and women who had learned to read and write. If Umuofia failed to send her children to the school, strangers would come from other places to rule them...From the very beginning religion and education went hand in hand" (166). Another negative aspect is the treatment of women. Women are treated harshly and not in any ways considered as equal to men. Masculinity is held in high esteem and femininity is used as an insult.

At the same time, the writer's attempts to balance between the good and the bad in the society, and takes a neutral position. Achebe shows that the Igbo have a high place for women in their lives. Apart from taking care of the children and helping the economy of the family by working in the fields, they also hold a supreme position. When Okonkwo is exiled to his mother's village, Okonkwo's uncle explains the idea that mother is supreme: "It's true that a child belongs to its father. But when a father beats his child, it seeks sympathy in its mother's hut. A man belongs to his fatherland when things are good and life is sweet. But when there is sorrow and bitterness he finds refuge in his motherland. Your mother is there to protect you." (124). He often emphasizes the capacity to realize the shortcomings of the system and change for the better within the culture. For example, in the past, the punishment for breaking the Week of Peace was harder: "A man who broke the peace was dragged on the ground through the village until he died. But after a while this custom was stopped because it spoiled the peace which it was meant to preserve" (33). They realized that it was not an appropriate punishment for the crime and changed it.

## Conclusion

African literature emphasizes the interrelatedness of literature with morality and the didactic quality of literature. Achebe, through *Things Fall Apart*, demonstrates the positive qualities of the Igbo culture in relation to a Western idea of progress and democracy. His target audience is the Western readers and he wants to show that Igbo culture is also democratic, tolerant, balanced, open to progress, and has a functioning belief system and an effective justice system. He is presenting Africa in a way that makes sense to Western readers. He is proposing that Africa is not a silent or incomprehensible continent to Europeans, in English and in the novel form which is a European genre by demonstrating the common humanity of these cultures.

Developed from an article by PALA MULL (Clash of Cultures in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*)

- In addition to examples and quotes from the book, in this essay, the writer uses in-text citations from critics and literary analysts to support the analysis.

## Sample Essay 02 (Extended): Language Restriction in The Giver

Hook

Summary of the main points of the body

Thesis statement

Quotes from the text

Topic sentence

Citations (critics and analysts)

Elaboration (**commentary, explanations, events, examples, illustration, etc.** all these may overlap in one sentence or one paragraph)

Paraphrasing of the views of critics, scientists, authors, etc.

### Introduction

"The limits of my language mean the limits of my world" (Ludwig Wittgenstein).

The power of language is undeniable, so if a person or group of people were to somehow develop control over language, the result would almost certainly be devastating. This is the case in Lois Lowry's 1993 young adult novel The Giver. The society has been designed so that "sameness" abounds. "Sameness," in their society, was established as a form of utopia where no conflict or inequalities existed; however, as we read the book, we realize it is a dystopia. "In order to achieve the Sameness which makes stability possible, the founders of Jonas's society took away from its citizens some of the most important things that make us human: strong emotion, the ability to appreciate beauty, and memory" (Levy). **There are a number of ways that control is applied on the people in Lowry's dystopia, but none more devastating than that which is exerted on language which links to modern theories of language and power.**

### Body

Fairclough's text "Language and Power" is written to address the way that language functions in the power structures in society. Many of the ways that the Committee of Elders in The Giver's society employs as methods of control are discussed by Fairclough in relation to modern society. One of the most insightful concepts presented in the text is that there are powerful participants in discourse who control and constrain the non-powerful participants (Fairclough 39). The constraints placed upon the non-powerful are distinguished in three ways "contents, on what is said or done; relations, the social relations people enter into in discourse; subjects, or the 'subject positions' people can occupy" (Fairclough 39). Control over these areas results in something Fairclough calls "structural effects," or the long-term effects of constraint on contents, relations, and subjects, in language. There are corresponding structural effects to the constraints placed on the three aforementioned categories, respectively, "knowledge and beliefs, social relationships, and social identities of an institution or society" (Fairclough 62) are all negatively impacted. The constraints, which were just on language, result in changes in the way people live and the things they think about. The consequences are even more severe in the case of The Giver, because the constraints have manifested into a form of absolute power over language, and thus, the Committee of Elders have power over the way people live and their ideas.

Each of these constraints is visible in the way that the Committee of Elders controls the people in The Giver. A second important concept presented by Fairclough is that power over discourse is cumulative. His argument is presented in terms of how the media controls discourse, and single documents do not have great effects, but over time, the effects of conditioning its readership can be seen. This same idea is applicable to the way the Committee of Elders has developed control over the society. The control the Committee has now could have never been implemented from the start, but gradually, their initial control has manifested into a form of absolute power.



There was no single document or definitive event that resulted in the status quo in the novel. The control in Jonas's society evolved and developed over the course of years, one restriction after another. The Committee of Elders has become powerful because they use every means available to control the people, and they are able to control the contents, relations, and subjects while continually expanding their power.

The faith that the members of the society place in their governmental leaders is the primary reason why language can be regulated so strictly. The people have been trained to trust in their leaders absolutely, and thus, they are made incapable of ever disagreeing with anything the leaders say or do. The trust the people have then enables the government to manipulate language in whatever way they see fit. The powerful participants are in complete control over the non-powerful participants. When messages come over the community wide loud speakers, the people are unable to interact with the agent who is delivering the message. The Community of Elders has all of the power, and the community members are left in a position where they can merely abide by the rules set before them. One of the ways their control is exercised is through their reliance on the people to imitate what they do. Political writing and speaking can have influence on people in a number of ways, and George Orwell describes, in the "Politics," how dangerous it is for a person to develop a "reduced state of consciousness" (Orwell) because they imitate political usage. The assumption made by the people is that the government's usage is *always* correct, so there is no need to critically think about what is right or wrong, it is easier to just imitate. Eventually, imitation becomes instinctual, and people never think about what they are actually saying.

One of the specific ways the Committee of Elders has clouded the meanings of words is through their use of euphemisms. Orwell discusses a government's use of euphemisms in his "Politics;" his contention is that they are used to make those situations which are deemed too complex to explain or defend to the average citizen sound vague (Orwell). Although this explanation may sound reasonable, it is segue to the government covering things up. Presumably, the Committee of Elders started and has since promoted the use of euphemisms to convolute the meanings of certain words. The necessary distinction is that the Committee of Elders promotes the use of the euphemisms that they develop; there is great emphasis placed on precision of language in the rest of society, but it is essential for the Committee of Elders to be able to make the meanings of words obscure, as you will in what follows.

Euphemisms are used "if one wants to name things without calling up mental pictures of them" (Orwell). Euphemisms conceal meaning, and this exact situation is played out in *The Giver* when Jonas discovers what it really means to be "released." In the society, there are a number of cases of release every year, but the people believe it is a joyful occasion because they have been conditioned to believe release is a good thing. Elderly people are released after a certain number of years in the House of the Old, and there are times when young children must be released because they do not meet the sameness standards for the young. Everyone believes these actions are necessary for the success of the society, but when Jonas learns that release is actually a state sponsored death sentence, he is filled with rage. He cannot believe that people stand for such treatment, but the Giver does his best to console him saying "[Listen to me, Jonas. They can't help it. *They know nothing.* [author's italics]" (Lowry 153). The killing of innocent people is sponsored by the government, but the society does not think anything is wrong with it because they have been conditioned to believe that release is a joyous occasion and absolutely necessary for the community. Also, the rabble is not aware that release is state sponsored killing, so they do not recognize release for

the atrocity it is. The Committee of Elders could not afford to have people calling up mental pictures of innocent people being put to death; they had to disguise the real meaning so that they could pursue their utopian ideals. In this case, language is manipulated to exert a greater control over the people, and the masses have no idea anything is wrong because they passionately believe that the Committee of Elders, their government, is infallible.

**The most startling euphemism in the whole novel is the title of Jonas's assignment.** Jonas becomes the Receiver of Memory, a position that has a lot of prestige and honor associated with it, but there are several alarming consequences of being assigned to this position. As Jonas fulfills his duty to receive the memories of the whole world, he is becoming the societal scapegoat. Nobody else in the community has a long-term memory that can be used to solve problems because they have designated one person to hold that position. Jonas is forced to bear the weight of the world on his shoulders, and he cannot share his knowledge with anyone outside of the Committee of Elders, and that only happens when he is consulted. The Receiver of Memory must be willing to sacrifice him/herself for the good of the community, and the government has deemed the position honorable, so there is little to no opportunity for a Giver or Receiver to ever enact changes. Also, the government's lionizing of the position has influenced the society at large to believe that there is prestige associated with the position, so the person assigned to be the Receiver is forced into a position where he/she must be the scapegoat for the society. The Receiver is "to be alone, apart" (Lowry 61) (read: ostracized) from society by the rules of the assignment. Nothing about the position can be shared with the other members of the community; as soon as Jonas begins his training, his role within the society becomes marginalized because he is expected to remain outside of it. The Committee of Elders has decided that there should be only one person responsible (read: burdened) with memories. The Receiver of Memory has been euphemized from meaning scapegoat or sacrifice to a vaguely described job, which is one of the most honored in the community. There is no better example of how dangerous euphemisms can be. Jonas and the Giver are caught in a triple bind, controlled by social norms, their inner notions of duty, and their positions in society.

The faith the people have in their government allows the government to actively use euphemisms without there every being any questions asked. Obscuring the meanings of words acts as a form of control over the contents of the discourse in society, and using Fairclough's analysis, the knowledge and beliefs of the people are impacted. The word "release" is vaguely understood to be a joyful occasion, because it has been euphemized. The community's knowledge of what is really going on has been affected because of the constraint placed on content. Also, the people in The Giver believe that Jonas's position is prestigious, even though the assignment requires Jonas to become the scapegoat. Constraining the content of discourse has changed what the people know and believe about the most honorable position in their society.

**The next method of control over language is the focus on the use of precise language.** Precise language is one of the most detrimental forms of control enacted by the Committee of Elder because, as I will expand on more later, the people think more about how to avoid being imprecise than they do about the words they are using. There is a lot of emphasis placed on precision in the society; however, the Committee of Elders takes a very hypocritical approach to this, because they do not follow the same guidelines. The committee can point out the errors others make, but they are allowed to be imprecise, and of course, it is *always* for the good of society. For the Committee of Elders, the societal focus on precision acts as a distraction from everything else. The belief in precision of language is so engrained in the people's minds that members of the society feel that without precision of language

the society would not function smoothly. In one scene, Jonas asks his parents if they love him, and they respond with ridicule that he should not use a word that is so vague (Lowry). Jonas's mother's explanation is "our community can't function smoothly if people don't use precise language" (Lowry 127). There are not only problems with the interaction between Jonas and his mother, and there are problems with the explanation she gives him.

The incident between Jonas and his mother reveals another way the members of the community are being controlled; there are constraints on relations between people as Fairclough discussed in his text. Jonas is unable to correct or disagree with his mother about using "love," because the society has unwritten rules about children being subordinate to their parents. Jonas is also constrained by the rules of his assignment, and those rules play a role in the way that he is to interact with his parents, so Jonas is actually bound to a specific role in two different ways. There are societal constraints placed on the way people interact with one another, and the structural effects of those are that social relationships between people are controlled. People cannot deviate from the expectations of or they will violate a rule. The problems inherent Jonas's mother's explanation are complicated because it is true that imprecise language can be problematic in a society, but in this case, the language is controlled to the point that even when the community members feel that they are being precise, they are merely imitating the usages passed down from the government. The people can only be as precise as their government allows them to be.

The focus on precise language is a type of control the government has over the people, and they use it to their advantage. Drawing from Orwell's analysis in "Politics," society members are in danger because each person has ceased to think about what is really meant; they are all just content to let the government do their thinking for them. Such a mindset has disastrous consequences because power is left unchecked, and it begins at the basic level of language. It is impossible to say how much control the original Committee of Elders had over the society, but because they are believed to be all-knowing and infallible, there is no reason for the people to ever question or think about anything that goes on in society. The Committee of Elders has absolute power because the people have absolute, unshakable faith in it. Also, the people have been systematically reduced to little more than machines because of the control exerted over language, although there are words coming out of their mouths, their brains are not used to choose the words for themselves (Orwell). They only use their brains to monitor their usage so they do not break a rule.

The ideal of precise language is a fundamental part of the society, and to ensure that it stays that way, it is part of the curriculum that children learn in school. During their school years, children are expected to continually develop their ability to use precise language, as it is "one of the most important tasks of small children" (Lowry 55). Children may be educated about a wide variety of things while at school, but there no doubt that the education they receive is dictated by what the Committee of Elders has decided should be learned. The government is allowed to regulate every aspect of these people's lives, and the control is permitted because the people believe that all things done are done to ensure the success of their community.

During the Ceremony of Twelve, there is a scary look at the way language is regulated. Asher, a classmate and friend of Jonas's, is brought to the stage to get his assignment, and the Chief Elder tells a story about Asher's trouble with the precision of language. During one school day, Asher received a number of smacks, a disciplinary tactic using a stiff wand to smack students' hands when offenses are committed, because he said that

he wanted a smack when he was intending to request a snack. The audience at the ceremony thinks the story is hilarious, rather than extremely offensive; they find nothing wrong with this type of discipline, because they believe that smacking a student for imprecise language is ok. Smacking ensures precise language, which ensures a functional community. Also, it is safe to assume that everyone in the audience had been smacked for the same offense as Asher, so they deem it ok. Vague words or imprecise usages are not acceptable because that is what each person has grown up believing; after all, such usages pose a danger to society. They believe that is the way it is and that is the way it has always been, so there is no reason to change. The people do not question why they need to have precise language; they just know that they can trust their Committee of Elders to always do what is right for the community.

The enforcement of precision of language is accomplished by the government's employment of two very distinct types of surveillance. In his article "Discipline and Its Discontents: A Foucauldian Reading of *The Giver*," Don Latham explores the ways in which control is exerted over the people. First of all, societal surveillance "can be seen in how carefully the members of the community watch one another. Even children are on the lookout for rule violations" (Latham). There is no room for people to be careless and make mistakes in their usage because everyone has been conditioned to always watch over the other community members, and this mindset can be linked back to the passionate belief that precision of language is essential for the society to function. There is a second type of surveillance over the people, and it is maybe the most effective "the self-monitoring that has been instilled in people" (Latham) is debilitating. Jonas clearly reveals how conscious his effort to monitor himself is because he spends a great deal of time searching for the most accurate word to describe his feelings. Flippant responses are unacceptable in this society, and the people want their society to succeed, so they monitor each other and themselves to help guarantee precise language.

## Conclusion

The strict control over language in the society dictates the rest of the actions of society members; they have become programmable. The government has infiltrated every aspect of these people's lives so there is little hope that anything will ever change. The measures that the Committee of Elders has taken have gone unnoticed because the people place so much faith in them, and the cyclic nature of their power perpetuates their control. The government has won absolute control over the people because they have been able to regulate the society's language and thus, knowledge.

Essay by [Joshua M. Seematter](https://joshuaseematter.wordpress.com/content-knowledge/the-giver/) adopted from <https://joshuaseematter.wordpress.com/content-knowledge/the-giver/> (The essay is modified, for the original version check the link)

**Question:** Does the writer of this essay use concluding sentences in his body paragraphs? If yes, explain their role in the coherence of the essay.

⇒ The Essays below contain more forms of thesis statements, topic sentences, supporting ideas, and textual evidence. After our session, you can check them to have more information about writing literary analysis essays.



## Hard Times: Dicken's Techniques to Highlight Social Criticism

- Hook
- Thesis Statement
- Topic sentences
- Quotes from the book
- Explanation or examples of the technique examined
- Illustrations from the book (events, characters, etc)
- Commentary (link to the thesis statement)
- Reformulation of the general statements in the introduction



### Introduction

Ideas of social change and progressive ideals are prominent in many nineteenth century works of literature. Charles Dickens' *Hard Times* is a prime example of a social criticism novel, putting prominent ideas of the time period, such as utilitarianism and social class, to the test. Dickens uses specific literary techniques that are highly effective in shocking the reader into understanding Dickens' views. Dickens uses symbolism, satire, and synecdoche, among other literary techniques, to emphasize his argument.

### Body

Perhaps the most effective technique is symbolism. Dickens uses it to exaggerate some ideas that may otherwise be overlooked in the overall complexity of the novel. A symbolic motif running throughout the novel is that of the farming cycle, and the idea of reaping what is sown. In the first chapters of the novel, Gradgrind, Bounderby and McChoakumchild "sow the seeds" of Fact into the young, fertile minds of children. The only seeds planted are those of Fact, and fancy and feeling are discouraged and tamped down by adults. In the second part of the book, the characters begin to "reap" what they "sowed" in the children at the beginning of the novel. The doctrine of fact alone begins to create problems as characters such as Louisa and Tom find themselves unable to make any right decisions, or feel any emotions at all. In part three of the novel, the harvest is "garnered", or stored, and the reader is hit with the true inadequacy of the seeds sown so long ago. Disasters such as Louisa's ruined marriage, Stephen's death, and Tom's undoing occur, and the characters who originally planted the seeds are left with nothing to sustain them. This use of obscure symbolism sharply and sometimes cruelly highlights Dickens' disgust with the utilitarian doctrines of fact, and the reader is unable to ignore his disdain. By using this symbolism, Dickens not only expresses his disgust and disagreement with many facets of utilitarianism, but also backs up his hatred with predictions of what will happen to the people if an entire society were based solely on fact.



Dickens also uses satire to incite the reader's vehemence for social change. In discussing many of the characters', and, indeed, Coketown's, love of fact, he adopts an almost religiously reverent view. He discusses the fact that most of the churches are unattended by the working masses: "A town so sacred in fact, and so triumphant in its assertion, of course it got on well? Why no...who belonged to the eighteen (religious) denominations? Because, whoever did, the laboring people did not..." (Book the first: Ch. V; pg. 38). He continually reinforces the ideas preached by Gradgrind and Bounderby, that Facts are the one scripture needful above every other facet of life, including religion itself. For Gradgrind, science and fact utterly consume him, leaving him no time to pay attention to the human need for comfort and peace that is often exemplified by religion. Gradgrind even goes so far as to replace the word "God" with the word "Fact" in the statement "God forbid", often exclaiming "Fact forbid!" when faced with something fanciful, such as the circus. All of these facets combine to create a highly satirical view of Coketown as a place where the religion is not one of God but one of fact. Dickens backs this up further by continually inserting religious allusions and fragments of prayers into descriptions of Coketown or passages that talk about fact. This satirical view of a much darker reality causes the reader to pause and forces thought on the twisted reality of a world where fact and science, both subject to human fallacy, have replaced a higher power.

Dickens utilizes synecdoche in order to exaggerate and bring across the true mechanization of the masses so prevalent in the Industrial age. He often refers to the Coketown workers as "the masses" and his characters often generalize them as "the hands", all wanting the same things, all doing the same things, and all part of nothing but the overall working machine of the town. In general, the individual is not spoken of; instead the whole represents the individual. This is a useful viewpoint for those such as Gradgrind and Bounderby to take because it is the view that creates the most profit. However, through his extensive use of this synecdoche, Dickens shows that it creates a vicious cycle, where the town can be ruined if only one small part of the working whole begins questioning, and where the people trapped in the cycle become less than human.

### Conclusion

Dickens questions the greater ideas driving Industrial age itself, the ideas of individuality as opposed to profit and output, and he causes readers to also question these ideas as they see the ruin of the people of Coketown, both the workers and the leaders, such as Bounderby and Gradgrind. Therefore, *Hard Times* is considered as a social criticism novel.

Essay from [gradesfixer.com](https://www.gradesfixer.com)

- You can use a bigger number of quotes in your essay.



For further information, read the following extended essay and learn other ways of using illustrations.

### Themes of The Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit

- Hook
- Thesis statement
- Topic sentence
- Citations (critics and analysts)
- Elaboration (commentary, events, explanations, examples, illustration; etc)
- Quotes from the text
- References from another book
- Restatement of the thesis statement

#### Introduction

Imagine yourself in a pre-industrial world full of mystery and magic. Imagine a world full of monsters, demons, and danger, as well as a world full of friends, fairies, good wizards, and adventure. In doing so you have just taken your first step onto a vast world created by author and scholar John Ronald Reuel Tolkien. Tolkien became fascinated by language at an early age during his schooling, in particular, the languages of Northern Europe, both ancient and modern. This affinity for language did not only lead to his profession, but also his private hobby, the invention of languages. His broad knowledge eventually led to the development of his opinions about Myth and the importance of stories. All these various perspectives: language, the heroic tradition, and Myth, as well as deeply-held beliefs in Catholic Christianity work together in all of his works. **The main themes of Tolkien's works are Good versus Evil, characters of Christian and anti-Christian origin, and the power of Imagination.**

#### Body

In Tolkien world, evil is the antithesis of creativity, and is dependent on destruction and ruin for its basis; conversely, goodness is associated with the beauty of creation as well as the preservation of anything that is created. The symbolic nature of these two ideologies is represented in the Elven Rings, which symbolize goodness, and the One Ring, which is wholly evil. A main theme of "The Hobbit", then, is the struggle within our own free will between good will and evil. **"Early in the (Lord of the Rings) narrative, Frodo recalls that his uncle Bilbo, especially during his later years, was fond of declaring that... there was only one Road; that it was like a great river: its springs were at every doorstep, and every path was tributary."** (Wood, 208)

Bilbo, the main character of "The Hobbit", often displayed his goodness throughout Tolkien's novel. One example of this goodness is when he decides to let the evil and corrupt Gollum live, out of pity for him, in the dark caves under the mountain. Bilbo could have easily slain the horrid creature mainly because of the ring,



which he was wearing at that time, gave him the power of invisibility. Instead, he risked his life to let the Gollum live by quickly jumping past the evil creature, thereby escaping death of either character. Gandalf, in a later narrative, lectures Frodo by praising Bilbo's act of pity upon Gollum. Gandalf's words were, **"Pity? It was pity that stayed his hand. Pity, and Mercy; not to strike without need. And he has been well rewarded Frodo."** For Gollum, later in the novel, saved Frodo from becoming possessed by the Ring of power. **"Many that live deserves death. And some that die deserve life. Can you give it to them? Then do not be too eager to deal out death in judgement..."** (Wood, 208)

**Another form of goodness that is displayed throughout "The Hobbit" and "The Lord of the Rings" is Bilbo and Frodo's actions of self-sacrifice.** In "The Hobbit" there are two instances in which villains caught the dwarves, Bilbo's fellow adventurers. Instead of fleeing their enemies, Bilbo risked his life to save the dwarves from the clutches of evil. One instance of this is when a clan of unusually large spiders captured Bilbo's companions and planned to eat them. Bilbo then devised a plan to distract the spiders away from their victims and then silently backtracked to his companions. He then cut the dwarves from the sticky spider webs with which they were tied and, together, they fought their way to safety. Also, Frodo, in "The Lord of the Rings" was challenged with the destruction of the all-evil and corrupting One Ring of power. In doing so, Frodo sacrificed his life. **"We should also remember that Frodo's self-sacrifice is not only for the defeat of evil; it is also for the good of society, for the whole community of created beings. This suggests, in turn, that in the mind of the fantasist, society is worth saving."** (Evans, 481)

**As opposed to the good deeds and morals portrayed by Bilbo and his companions, there are many foul and unholy creatures that lurk in the pages of Tolkien's works, which commit horrible acts.** One of the most horrid of the acts in "The Hobbit" was the corruption of Gollum. Gollum was not always the slimy, cave dwelling, dangerous monster that he became. He was once a Hobbit, not unlike Bilbo himself, named Smeagol. However, one day he and his brother, Deagol, were by a riverbank. Deagol found the ring of power. Then, Smeagol, who soon became the Gollum, killed his brother to attain the Ring of power for himself. This Ring, **"the Ring to rule them all"**, had the power to corrupt any person who possessed it. Whether it was the Ring's overpowering magic or simply Gollum's lust for the ring, the corruption that overcame Smeagol drove him to commit the ghastly murder of his brother.

**Even though Tolkien claims that "The Hobbit" and "The Lord of the Rings" were not written in the light of Christianity or as an allegory, there is a great presence of religious symbolism throughout his epic.** Urang agrees in his statement, **"The Lord of the Rings, although it contains no 'God', no 'Christ', and no 'Christians', embodies much of Tolkien's 'real religion'**



**and is a profoundly a Christian work."** Tolkien, whether by mistake or purposely, seems to relate the adventures and acts of his characters Bilbo and Gandalf closely to the acts of Christ in the Bible. In the "The Hobbit", Bilbo often acted as Jesus would in the Bible. Confronted with the possession of the evil Ring of power, Bilbo was often tempted to use the Ring in excess and for wrong reasons. **However the strong willed hobbit never succumbed to that evil power, much like when Jesus resists the temptation of Satan in the desert in Matthew 3:16. In short, the passage explains how the Lord, after fasting for forty days and forty nights, resists the temptation to create food and feast.** He then is tested by Satan to call upon his angels to save him from deadly leap off of the highest point of a high precipice. Jesus simply turns Satan away again. Also, one of Bilbo's descendants, Frodo, was burdened with the temptation of the Ring. Frodo knew of the power that the Ring held and knew that he could either be a great evil power himself, or that this great evil thing must be destroyed.

**Another Christian-like manifestation of Tolkien's creative imagination is the character of Gandalf, the good wizard. "Gandalf, the Christ-like wizard who lays down his life for his friends, knows that he is an unworthy bearer of the Ring – not because he has evil designs that he wants secretly to accomplish, but rather because his desire to do good is so great." (Wood 208)** Gandalf is an important pawn and advantage to the hobbit and dwarves in their adventure. He often guides, gives advice, and overall helps the adventurers along in their great journey. Believers of Christianity also believe that Christ is with them, guiding and showing the way to salvation, throughout their day. Although Gandalf, in Tolkien's novels, never cured a blind man or leper with a touch of his hand, he compares to Jesus in the miracles of his magic and spell casting.

**Not all the characters that Tolkien depicts in his novels are Christ-like or overall good-natured characters. There are plenty, if not as many, evil doing entities.** Saruman is a wizard much like Gandalf. However, they contrast in the respect that Saruman uses his miracles and spell casting powers to do works of evil rather than good. He is utterly undone by the lure of total power. **In the New Testament, Judas, believing Jesus to be the long awaited and prophesized king of the Jews, wanted to speed the earthly rule of Jesus.** He delivered him to the Romans in thoughts that he would perform his miracles and prove that he is, in fact, the king of the Jews. Like Judas, Saruman is impatient with the slow way that goodness works. He cannot abide the torturous path up Mount Doom; he wants rapid results.

**When Tolkien created the "The Lord of the Rings" and its prelude, he created an entire imaginary world full of wonder and adventure.** In reading his books you fall deeper and deeper into its detail and depth, which makes his fictional world very believable. In a way, it eventually mutates your sense of reality and creates what is called "secondary belief."



"Knowing that an Imaginary world must be realistically equipped down to the last whisker of the last monster, Tolkien put close to 20 years into the creation of middle earth, the three-volume 'Lord of the Rings,' and its predecessor, 'The Hobbit.'" (Time) Even after his four masterpieces were finished and published, he continued to build upon the fictional reality that he created with his next two books "Simarillion" and "Akallabeth," which told the early history of middle- earth. Tolkien's power to command secondary belief in his readers is real. History comes alive in the characters and events because he creates speeches and actions that have the **"inner consistency of reality."** (Evans, 481). Reading the "Lord of the Rings", for some people, is a great way to get away, or escape, from reality. In the time of the publishing of "The Hobbit" the United States was at war. **"Perplexed by our nation's carnage in Vietnam and by the ultimate threat of a nuclear inferno, a whole generation of young Americans could lose themselves and their troubles in the intricacies of this triple-decker epic."** (Wood 208)

## Conclusion

**By the use of his amazing imagination, as well as mastery of language and knowledge of myth and Christian principles, Tolkien created his characters who were the epitome of good and evil.** It would seem the Ring itself had the power of the devil. However, the virtues of the Christ-like Bilbo and Frodo Baggins destroyed the all-consuming evil for the purpose of the common good. It is the Christ ethic that is the force that conquers evil. Tolkien's writings mesmerize the reader, creating a spell bounding "secondary reality" for all that reads it.

**Essay adapted from [onlineessays.com](http://onlineessays.com) and modified.**

## Task:

- Try to identify the main elements of writing a theme analysis essay.
- Identify the possible types of textual evidence we can use to support our analysis. (answers are found in the essays above)