

P1 Formal Draft

Due **Thursday 2/1**

~900 words

Now that you have started a close reading, it's time to shape those ideas into a more formal and cohesive essay.

Remember that the goal of this essay is to help someone read the selected text more deeply, see it in a new light, or understand something about the text that he or she might have missed. You are seeking to illuminate your text for your readers, not simply to say that it is bad or good, likeable or unlikeable, or right or wrong. You are **not proving or disproving the author's argument**; you are **developing your own argument** about the relationship between the author's language and his/her project.

As you think about how to structure your draft, consider your readers. What will they need to know in order to appreciate the value of your project? You are writing for astute, general readers who may be completely unfamiliar with your chosen essay and subject matter. Your readers are willing to be generous, as long as you give them a sense that your project matters, and that you have crafted your essay carefully to carry out this project.

Follow these basic guidelines as you formalize your writing:

Beginning:

1. Write a **working title** of your essay's formal draft.
2. Write a **working introduction** of your essay. Keep in mind that introductions serve two overarching purposes: they establish a relation with your readers, and they invite readers to follow your idea or argument. Your introduction will evolve as your argument evolves, so do not spend too much time on the introduction right away (be sure to return to it later).
3. Somewhere in this introduction, present the **author's primary argument**, and specify the **central claims** or **questions** this text raises for readers.
4. Present your specific **project** and larger **purpose** for this essay: what are you specifically looking at in this text? What do you want to illuminate about the text? What gaps or unexplored possibilities do you see in the text, and what do you intend to bring to them?
5. **Establish a claim** that connects your analysis of the passage(s) to the author's larger essay.
6. Then provide a clear **motive** for your claim. Why would your essay matter to your readers?

Middle:

2. The middle of this essay will focus your readers' attention on specific passages, patterns, and moments from the text that you find most notable. This is your chance to incorporate **close readings**, to **link your claims** by citing **evidence** from different sections of text, and to show what **new insights** you are bringing to the text.
3. Build paragraphs around individual points that are the basis of your overall claim.
4. Each paragraph should have a specific purpose; it should either develop its own claim, or present specific information that will be necessary for a later claim. Every sentence in each paragraph should be in that paragraph for a specific reason.
5. Support each particular claim with direct quotes from the text (or with cited paraphrases).
6. After a quotation, briefly reiterate what the author *says* in your own words. Then move on to what the author *does* in that quote. How does the author's language and/or form complicate what he/she says?

End:

3. The end of the essay does not repeat the beginning, but indicates what we ought to understand or see now about the text you're working with that we hadn't noticed before. It is also the place to consider the broader **implications** of your project.