

**Purpose:** The purpose is to offer a critique of a short story, poem, or play, focusing on one or more of the following elements: theme, images, form, plot, mood, symbols/motifs, characters, setting, etc. The essay should not offer an opinion on the work but should study its meaning in light of the elements it contains.

**Introduction:** The introduction should hook the reader and should bring attention to your topic. The title of the literary work and the author's name should be in this paragraph. This should also include your thesis, which should be the last sentence of the introduction.

**Body paragraphs:** In your body paragraphs, you can offer some summary of the literary work, but the focus should be to analyze one or two elements of the literary work. Then, offer support of your analysis through examples from the text.

Examples:

Characters: In *Jane Eyre*, Jane's feminist attitude came through her refusal to marry Mr. Rochester and then her rejection of St. John River's offer to go to India.

Symbolism: The moon appeared throughout the novel, once represented as a woman.

Theme: Class becomes a key theme, especially when comparing the characters of Jane and Mr. Rochester.

**Quoting material:** Quotes are a great way to offer support of your main points. You can use a summary, paraphrase, or direct quote of the material.

Ex.: John Reed illustrated a patriarchal dominance over Jane, who "was bewildered by the terror he inspired...[and] had no appeal whatever against either his menaces or his inflictions" (Brönte 10).

**Conclusion:** The conclusion restates the thesis and main points, using different words. Though the conclusion should not include another topic, it can show a new perspective on the main points you have previously stated.

## List of Literary Terms:

Characters: depictions of a person, place, or object with human characteristics, defined by what they say, do, and think. They can be either flat (possessing one quality, unchanging) or round (possessing many qualities, changing).

Figurative Language: Phrases or sentences that show meanings beyond the surface or literal meaning. Examples include simile, metaphor, personification, and hyperbole.

Imagery: A highly visual or sensational construction that creates an image for the reader.

Plot: An organization of events that compose the story. A common structure for a plot is exposition (background information), rising action (events leading to the climax), climax (section where the story changes), falling action (events leading to the resolution), and resolution (resolved conflict).

Point of View: The person (or someone with human characteristics) who says the story and how that person says it. The point of view can be in first (“I”), second (“you”), or third person (unnamed narrator). The narrator can be omniscient, which means that the narrator knows other characters’ thoughts and feelings.

Rhythm: Stressed and unstressed beats within a poem.

Setting: Where the story takes place.

Symbolism: A person, place, or thing that represents another concept.

Tone: The suggested attitude of the literary work, such as formal, informal, ironic, hopeful, or worried.

## Sample Outline

- I. Introduction
  - a. Thesis: In Charlotte Brönte’s novel, *Jane Eyre*, Brönte uses the character of Jane, the tone, and imagery to advocate a feminist attitude toward Victorian culture of that time period.
- II. Body Paragraph 1: Discuss the character of Jane
- III. Body Paragraph 2: Discuss tone
- IV. Body Paragraph 3: Discuss imagery
- V. Conclusion