

Symbolism Essay

Basics

* 5-paragraph essay format

- * Introduce book, symbol, and theme(s) in first paragraph. Include “sneak peak” of main topics that will make up the body of the essay. (You do not need to tell the whole plot of the book. Assume your reader is familiar with the book.)
- * Explain three different aspects of your symbol, one in each body paragraph. Include details and evidence from the book that support your points.
- * Conclude by bringing together all of your three points to show that the symbol is significant throughout the entire book.

* third-person point of view

- * Avoid first person. (Ex. Don't say things like “I chose this symbol because...” or “I think this symbol means...”)
- * Explain how the symbol is part of the book by talking about the book, not yourself or your choices.

* **explain, not announce**

- * Avoid what Mrs. Coleman calls “announcements,” or sentences and phrases that tell your point instead of showing it through explanation.
- * Examples of announcements to avoid: This essay is to explain how _____ is a symbol in the book _____... This paragraph is about... This essay has explained....

Go for Excellence!

* **literary present tense**

- * The Basic Rule: You should use **present tense** when discussing fictional events.
- * When discussing events in a book or story, always use the present tense, unless there is a shift in the time frame within the world of the text.

*Example: Evelyn then **rips** into the carefully wrapped package and **finds** the greatest gift she has ever received. Her eyes **fill** with tears as she **gazes** at the jewel, but Philip **does** not **know** that these tears are the results of more than surprised joy. Evelyn **is suffering** from guilt as she **compares** this present to the shoddy gift that she **bought*** for her beau.*

(“Bought” is in past tense because the buying of the present occurred before the described set of events.)¹*

* **smooth transitions**

- * Try to structure your essay so that the points in each body paragraph lead into one another smoothly. The points should build logically upon each other and/or connect to each other.

* **quotations**

- * Include direct quotations from the book to support your point. Quotations are great to make the introduction and conclusion more interesting!

¹ Source for Literary Present Tense Information: Vanderbilt Writing Studio
<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/writing/resources/Literary%20present%20tense.pdf>