

Section 7: Sample Analytical Essay Prompts

About This Section:

The prompts found below are intended to give examples of the types of questions that might be asked in Section C of the exam. The prompts below are in response to texts that are familiar to teachers and students. This will allow for many of these prompts to be used for practice purposes in the classroom, if so desired. It should be noted however, that the piece given on Section C of the exam will not come from any authorized or prescribed text from English 3201. It will be unseen.

It is also important to note the “you may consider” phrase in these analytical essay prompts, as well as the one seen on the Sample Exam. This phrase will appear in the analytical prompt on the public exam as well. The prompt is intended to be prescriptive, lending itself to straightforward organization for students. However, the “you may consider” phrase allows for students who see alternatives to the suggested direction of the prompt, the option to explore this alternative. For example, in the first prompt below on “Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night”, students are asked to analyze how the poet develops theme. There is no option with this portion of the prompt. The essay must be about theme. However the “you may consider such devices as repetition, imagery and oxymoron” portion of the question offers students the option to explore other devices that lead to the development of theme. If a student wants to explore other devices rather than repetition, imagery and oxymoron, such as metaphor or imagery, the prompt allows for this.

Whether a student chooses to explore the devices given in the prompt or those of their own choosing in developing a thesis, they should make their choice clear in the introduction to their essay.

- 1) Read the poem “Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night” by Dylan Thomas carefully. Then write an essay in which you identify and analyze how the poet develops his theme. In your analysis, you may consider such devices as repetition, imagery and oxymoron.
- 2) The sonnets “Letter to an Astronaut” and “Reply” by Jane lordakieva deal with a sense of longing. Write an essay where you analyze how this sense of longing is developed. In your analysis, you may consider temporal references, figurative language and specific detail.
- 3) Carefully read the excerpt (Chapter 86) from *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel. Here we get a sense of the unique bond between Pi and Richard Parker, the wild Bengal tiger. Write an essay where you analyze how this bond is evident. In your analysis, you may consider dialogue, setting and conflict.
- 4) Rex Murphy describes Gooseberry Cove as a place of “tranquility” in his “A Cove of Inner Peace on Newfoundland’s Cape Shore.” Write an essay where you analyze how Murphy captures this “tranquility.” In your analysis, you may consider the writer’s use of allusion, diction and imagery.

5) Read the excerpt from *Unbroken* (Chapter 12 – beginning to top of p. 133) by Laura Hillenbrand. Write an essay where you analyze the development of atmosphere. In your analysis, you may consider imagery, setting and specific events.

6) Carefully read “The Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin. Write an essay where you analyze how the author reveals the character of Mrs. Mallard. In your analysis, you may consider setting, irony and imagery.

7) Read Ray Bradbury’s “The Flying Machine.” Write an essay where you analyze the symbolic significance of the flying machine. In your analysis you may consider specific events, dialogue and the contrast between the flying machine and the Emperor’s miniature garden.

8) Read the essay “Am I Blue?” by Alice Walker. Write an essay where you identify and analyze the development of Walker’s main argument. In your analysis you may consider the writer’s use of analogy, specific detail and the character of Blue.

9) Read Liam O’Flaherty’s “The Sniper.” Write an essay where you analyze the development of mood in the story. You may consider the writer’s use of setting, character and conflict.

10) Read the excerpt from William Shakespeare’s *Othello* (Act 3, Scene 3, Lines 409-479). Write an essay where you analyze what contributes to Othello’s downfall into madness. In your essay you may consider evidence of Othello’s naiveté and the cunning of Iago.