**English 10H – Analytical / Persuasive Essay**

Write a formal, analytical essay about one of the texts listed below in which you attempt to add to the body of scholarship on this particular text. You have an important idea and/or an important perspective. You want to share that idea/perspective with a reader. You must view the reader as one who wants to learn more about the story. You are educating your reader about the text and why it is important that we read it.

*Oedipus Rex*

*Things Fall Apart*

*Your Victorian Literature ORB*

*A poem from the poetry unit (must run by me if it is not from the packet)*

**HOW TO BEGIN?**

Hopefully you have been curious about the texts we have been reading. Perhaps one idea has been more memorable than the others because some aspect of it has perplexed you or resisted a simple, straightforward interpretation. Or perhaps after much thought and class discussion, you’ve arrived at an idea about these stories that you feel is slightly different from what your classmates have been saying AND you can support it by directing the reader’s attention to words, phrases, descriptions, and/or actions in the text. Is there a “why” question that intrigues you so much that you want to write an essay about it? For example:

- Why does the author frame the text *that* way?

- Yes, the text is about X, but what does author really want us to take away (theme, idea, commentary on society) from it?

- I noticed that the author brings object/situation X into the stories several times--why? And how do these objects/situations contribute to a theme or idea from the stories?

One way to measure whether or not your WHY question is worth pursuing is to ask yourself if there is complexity to the answer to your question? If the answer is yes, proceed to formulate your claim.

**STATING YOUR CLAIM:**

Before you state your claim, you need to answer more follow-up questions. What are the plausible answers to your WHY question? What will you write about in your supporting paragraphs? What information will the reader need to be convinced that your claim is believable and plausible?

Make sure that your claim is a provable and arguable assertion as opposed to a statement of fact.

A claim that a character prefers solitude is too one-dimensional and is probably a truth of the story. A claim that explains that a character’s preference for solitude puts him in difficult situations that cause him to question his past behavior allows for deeper exploration of this character and is a provable and arguable assertion. If you find yourself asking about your claim, “Well, why is this important?” or, more callously, “So what?”, then you need to add more substance to your claim.

**BUILDING YOUR ARGUMENT:**

Layer your evidence and your analysis within the body paragraphs and use your opening and closing sentences to reinforce the structure of the essay and to connect evidence to your claim. Use a variety of strategies to incorporate textual evidence into your paragraphs.

**Your Conclusion**

Restate your claim, briefly summarize your evidence, and conclude by answering the “why is this theme/idea important?” question. What conclusions can you draw from the way that the author develops ideas in her work? You are making broader statements here so try to make them substantive and not too general or too obvious. The conclusion requires precise word choice and thoughtful “stepping back” analysis (stepping back and putting this discussion in a larger context).

**900 - 1200 words – No Exceptions**

**100 points**

Tuesday, February 3 – hard copy of rough draft due at the start of class

Friday, February 6 – hard copy of final paper due at the state of class. Your paper must also be submitted to turniton.com by the end of the school day on 2/6.