

Individual Assignment: Character Analysis

Purpose: To demonstrate understanding of Shakespearean characterization and to practice making written arguments supported by textual evidence.

Instructions: For this assignment, each student will write a 1000-1200 word essay comparing two Shakespearean characters from plays or poems that we have read this semester (Shakespeare's "dark lady" and the speaker from the sonnets count as characters for the purpose of this assignment). The two characters can be from the same text or different ones. The focus of the essay should be on arguing a specific point about the chosen characters, which is supported by analyzing direct quotations from the texts in which the characters appear.

Requirements: Your character analysis essay should have the following components:

- 1000 word minimum
- Typical college essay format (double-spaced, legible font, textual citations in a recognizable style such as MLA or APA)
- Professional tone, language, and grammar
- Between 3-5 significant direct quotations from Shakespearean texts on the course syllabus, related to one or both of the characters undergoing analysis.
- An arguable thesis that makes a specific claim about the relationship between the two characters in the essay.

Due Date: October 30 at 9:00pm via eCampus

Grading: This assignment is out of 150 points. Like previous assignments, grades are assigned based on completion of the assignment, with an A requiring you to go above and beyond the bare minimum.

A (150)	To receive an A (150), students should incorporate a peer-reviewed journal article of Shakespearean criticism into their essay and increase the minimum word count to 1200.
B (128)	All students who turn in a complete character analysis essay (i.e. includes all required components) will receive a B (128).
C (114)	An assignment may receive a C (114) either through late penalties, or if the character analysis is submitted, but missing part of a component (i.e. too few or too many direct quotations, no internal citations).

D (98)	An assignment may receive a D (98) through late penalties, or if the character analysis is submitted, but missing one component (i.e. consistently not using professional tone/language/grammar, no thesis statement).
F (88 or o)	An F (88) is assigned through late penalties, or if the assignment is submitted, but missing multiple components. An F (o) is only assigned if you do not turn in the assignment at all.

Choosing Characters: For this assignment, choose two characters from Shakespeare texts that have strong similarities. The purpose of comparing the two characters should be to teach the reader something that will change how they understand Shakespeare in general, or his texts in particular.

Designing an Arguable Thesis: An arguable thesis is a statement that can be argued for or against. It is an idea, a theory, or a perspective that needs to be proven, and is not something obvious or already assumed about the subject in question. For this essay, a successful thesis will be a one-sentence argument about the relationship between two characters and how their similarities can teach readers of Shakespeare something new. Each quotation used in the essay should be analyzed to show how it supports the thesis.

Organizing Your Essay: A successful essay for this assignment will have an introduction paragraph that states the main argument of the paper, followed by several body paragraphs that examine sub-points of the argument. These sub-points are defended using direct quotations. At the end, the essay will have a conclusion paragraph that reminds the reader of the essay's main point and why the sub-points make that argument more likely true than not. A successful conclusion will also tell the reader why and how the essay's argument should change the reader's understanding of Shakespeare or his texts.

Finding Peer-Reviewed Shakespeare Criticism: To receive an A, students will need to cite one peer-reviewed journal article of Shakespearean criticism into their essay. The easiest way to do this is to use the World Shakespeare Bibliography, an online database of Shakespearean plays and publications. To find the WSB, go to the library's home page and click "Databases." Type in "World Shakespeare Bibliography" and click the link. At the top of the WSB home page, select "Search & Browse," and make sure to click the "Advanced Search." Under Advanced Search, limit the language field to English and the Document Type to "Journal Articles." You may also want to select specific plays under the "Tags" menu. Once you have entered in your search terms, your results will show up.

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