

Analytical paper assignment

This paper will ask you to offer a close-reading/analysis of a passage or passages from one of the literary texts that we've read so far, along with an *original interpretive argument* about the text.

Start by reviewing the two handouts, "What is a close-reading?" and "How to Construct a Critical Paper." Then, re-read and annotate the story that you're interested in analyzing, highlighting or taking notes on particular points of interest. Identify one or two passages that you think offer some potential for creative interpretation and work through the steps of doing a "close-reading" on each. Don't worry at first about tying all the possible interpretations together—just let your mind generate as many alternate readings as possible.

Now, take the ideas that you've generated and try to develop an original thesis that accounts for as many of your interpretations as possible (excluding the ones that don't seem relevant to your general idea). Remember that your thesis should be "original," "arguable," and "complex."

In five pages, you need to present your thesis (opening paragraph), several substantive paragraphs that develop particular points needed to prove your thesis, and a conclusion that explains why your close-reading contributes to our understanding of the story as a whole. Be creative and challenging, but draw all of your evidence from the language of the text—no subjective opinions ("I feel," "I like," "It's dumb," etc.), no outside sources, and no summaries or obvious re-statement of something already in the text. Remember that you're *interpreting*, not "reviewing" the text.

Remember to use proper grammar, style, and formatting: 5 pages typed, 1.5 or double spaced, 1-inch margins, 11 or 12 point font, all pages numbered. You need a cover page with your title, name, class section, my name, and date. Staple all pages together.

Before you finalize the paper, you may want to look over the handouts called "Questions to Help Evaluate Your Own Papers" and "Professorly Picky's 'A Series of Unfortunate Occurrences'" for a review of common paper problems.