

PROSE PASSAGE STRATEGIES

- Highlight prompt.
- Write in 3rd person, present tense!
- Author's name and work's title in opening paragraph
- Meaning of work as a whole (main lesson/theme) included in opening paragraph.
Establish the direction of your essay in the opening paragraph.
- Thesis in opening -- "The text shows X in order to show/highlight/accomplish Y."
- Underline or circle parts as you read. Annotate in the margin.
- Note point of view as you read: first-person, third-person limited (narrator tells story from perspective of only one of the characters) and third-person omniscient (narrator can see into the mind of more than one character).
- One-sentence summary -- Quickly jot down at end of selection.
- Tone (note shifts in tone) SO WHAT?
- Irony -- Star it! Always address irony if it is present. SO WHAT?
- Address other literary elements as required and as needed. SO WHAT?
- Interweave analysis with summary. Pure summary is death! Support points you make.
- Don't use line numbers; briefly quote. Don't give first and last word with ellipsis in between.
- Don't say "The author uses diction" or that "Sentences have syntax" -- these are givens!
Get to the point. (Ex. William Blake depicts a blacksmith's setting for the creation of the tyger with "furnace," "anvil," and "hammer." Syntactically, William Blake's "The Fly" displays an erratic movement of lines that mimic the movement of a fly.)
- Conclude, even if you only have time for one sentence. Restate your thesis, emphasize "meaning as a whole" or "significant to the work," and clinch it.
- Creative writing is not academic writing. Academic writing is analytical writing.

OPEN-ENDED STRATEGIES

- Highlight prompt.
- Write in 3rd person, present tense! Underline the novel or play!
- Author's name and work's title in opening paragraph
- Meaning of work as a whole (main lesson/theme of work) included in opening paragraph. Establish the direction of your essay in the opening paragraph.
- Thesis in opening -- "The text shows X in order to show/highlight/accomplish Y."
- Plan your essay. Use webbing or mapping if that will help, but take 5 minutes or so to jot down your thoughts.
- Plan your major points and try to place in order of importance, transitioning from one paragraph to the next.
- Interweave major points of prompt throughout opening paragraph and essay.
- Interweave analysis with summary. Pure summary is death! Support points you make.
- Incorporate a few "bit quotes." Choose several from novels you have read.
- Conclude, even if you only have time for one sentence. Restate your thesis, emphasize "meaning as a whole" or "significant to the work," and clinch it.
- No comments like: "I liked the novel or play." "Shakespeare was a great writer."
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