

**AP English Literature**

**FINAL EXAM 2016**

**AP Exam Free-Response Question 3 (Thematic Analysis Essay)**

1. In retrospect, the reader often discovers that the first chapter of a novel or scene of a play introduces some of the major themes of the work. Write an essay about the beginning of a literary work in which you explain how the chapter functions to set forth one of the work's major themes.
2. In literary works, cruelty often functions as a crucial motivation or a major social or political factor. Select a novel, play, or epic poem in which acts of cruelty are important to the theme. Then, write a well-developed essay examining how cruelty functions in the work as a whole and what the cruelty reveals about the perpetrator and/or victim. Do not merely summarize the plot.
3. Critic Roland Barthes has said, "Literature is the question minus the answer." Choose a novel or play and, considering Barthes' observation, write an essay in which you analyze a central question the work raises and the extent to which it offers any answers. Explain how the author's treatment of this question affects your understanding of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.
4. Morally ambiguous characters—characters whose behavior discourages readers from identifying them as purely evil or purely good—are at the heart of many works of literature. Choose a novel or play in which a morally ambiguous character plays a pivotal role. Then, write an essay in which you explain how the character can be viewed as morally ambiguous and why his or her moral ambiguity is significant to the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.
5. In many novels and plays, a character has a misconception of himself or his world. Destroying or perpetuating this illusion contributes to a central theme of the play. Choose a text with a major character to whom this statement applies, and write an essay in which you consider the following points: what the character's illusion is and how it differs from reality as presented in the text and how the destruction or perpetuation of the illusion develops a major theme.

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