

Grade 9-10

Self Assessment

Other College Literary Assignments

English 1B

The Handmaid's Tale & gender roles

The Handmaid's Tale imposes extreme forms of femininity or gender roles defined solely by sex on its female characters. Why? How? And So What?

In an organized essay (thesis, topic sentences, transitions, focused paragraphs, discussion, examples, quotes, MLA format...) explore ideas of gender roles as they might be reinforced by laws, limitations, constraints, enforcement, indoctrination, social or cultural expectations, punishment, rewards, role models, access to education and opportunities, and other means by which people (women and men) are led to find certain roles natural or unnatural, acceptable or unacceptable, safe or unsafe.

You must discuss The Handmaid's Tale as a central example. Other examples may include the other texts we've read or seen in class, and/or other cultural examples of which you're aware, and/or non-fictional accounts of "real life" gender constraints or constructions.

Be sure to tie your examples together with a unifying thesis or central insight that goes beyond "these are similar" or "these are different" or "these are bad." Why might society, or segments within society, want to see certain kinds of gender roles (lifestyles, opportunities, choices, responsibilities, abilities, decisions, aspirations, options...) reinforced or repressed? Why would certain methods be most effective, most appealing, to such groups? How might certain kinds of gender expectations or norms connect to a larger picture of the world, of culture, of society, or of those groups or individuals desiring to create or reinforce certain kinds of roles or systems? Why would preferred or praised or privileged gender roles be seen as desirable? Why would rejected or feared or repressed gender roles be seen as undesirable, even threatening? To whom, and why?

Peer review is 11/21, and the paper is due 11/30.

English IB

Parable of the Sower/Woman on the Edge of Time paper

Remember: of the 3 remaining prompts, (Parable/Woman, Handmaid/gender, Frankenstein/Bladerunner) you should only write 2 (unless you skipped the

1984/BNW paper). No, you can't get extra credit for writing all 3. One should be 4-5 pages long and the other 5-6 pages long, with 3 sources (articles about the texts or topics you're exploring, quoted, discussed, applied to your thesis, and reflected in a bibliography).

In both Parable of the Sower and Woman on the Edge of Time we see women with special abilities, set apart by differences that provide both advantages and disadvantages. We also see futures in which society has radically changed or is in the process of changing, and characters who seek actively to effect change.

In an organized essay with a clearly stated thesis and specific support from the texts, explore one or more of the following ideas:

What role or function does special abilities play in these texts? Especially given the fact that in each text, many women are represented as vulnerable and helpless, and their societies would be unlikely to consider these women "special" or important.

Both Connie and Lauren find themselves resorting to desperate, even violent measures in the pursuit of what they believe to be right. Are they justified, by the texts, by their goals, by their values, by their success? Remain objective and focus on the texts - do not offer personal moral judgments of the characters or the texts.

Each future society has rebuilt, or intends to, by using what is useful from the past. Explore the ideas of memory, tradition, usefulness, purging... as they relate to the changes these societies seek to make, the continuities they see as valuable, and perhaps even the relationships and decisions characters pursue.

Lauren's vision of her world is very different from that in Luciente's world. Explore the idea of space travel, space exploration, space colonization as it relates to and informs the larger issues or themes in each text.

Lauren's interest in religion, faith, and God is very different from that in Luciente's world. Explore the idea of religion, of belief in any kind of deity or extra-human force, as it relates to and informs the larger issues or themes in each text.

Cultural difference is valued by some, not by others (or differently by others) in each text. Explore the significance of multi-culturality, acceptance, equality and respect as it relates to larger issues or themes in each text.

Labor, whether defined as effort or as wage-earning, plays a significant role in defining characters' options in both texts, and labor seems to be valued differently by various people, cultures, or classes in these texts. Explore ways in which work or labor or employment relate to larger issues or themes in each text.

English IB 1984/Brave New World

In a developed essay of 4-5 pages, explore 1984 and Brave New World.

Pick one topic of significance (or more than one, if they're closely related) and explore it, using quotes, details, close reading, and careful discussion of significance.

The following observations are starting points, but your topic need not come from this list. In any case, your paper should not be a simple compare/contrast, this book is like X but that book is like Y catalog. Why is it important that they're different, or that they've found different solutions to the same problem? If one society is preferable to the other, is it significant that that society has made a different choice? Since both authors wrote of futures they feared or found troubling, is it significant that their fears took similar or different forms?

Both texts describe worlds in which there is a multinational or world government, with no opposition or democracy. Both texts represent societies in which government/society dictates personal lifestyle, including sexual behavior and family life. Both texts use education and ideology, including forms of brainwashing, to support the societies they represent. Both societies expect their members to prefer communal activities to private ones. Both societies have stable economies, with production tied to population ... though in very different ways. Both governments have set levels of consumption and access to goods in ways that support the societies they desire. Both texts explore questions of free will, choice, and human individuality. Both societies forget their dead quickly. Both societies have rigid hierarchies and impose visible markers of class or caste. Both societies revere specific men rather than deities, though in different ways. Both societies provide members with a constant bombardment of media distractions. Both governments have established ways of dealing with dissent and alternative views. Both societies suppress memory and nostalgia.

In 2-3 pages, in MLA format, discuss two or three of the following texts: Pygmalion, A Doll House, The Yellow Wallpaper.

Your essay should focus exclusively on the texts - do not digress to discuss Real Life, your own or anyone else's, or what should happen in the world. Do not provide a history of feminism or female oppression. Stick to the texts.

The purpose of a literary analysis is to clarify the nature of the text, its heart or core. The way to do this is to notice, and tie together through discussion/explanation, related elements of the texts that, in combination, support and illustrate an argument about the text as a whole.

Analyze ways in which the texts engage with one or more of the following issues,

providing a specific thesis, detailed discussion of that thesis/argument, and specific support drawn from the texts - including quotes and summary, explained in the terms of your thesis.

Oppression
Repression
Traps
Paralysis
Obedience
Control
Power
Independence
Identity
Pride
Home
Prison
Depression
Resistance

1. [Rubrics](#)
2. Lesson Plans
3. Sample Essays
4. [Related Assignments](#)
[Related Assignments](#)
[Related Assignments](#)
[Related Assignments](#)