



CORNERSTONE

— PREPARATORY ACADEMY —

TRUTH • VIRTUE • WISDOM



READ
DEEPLY



THINK
CRITICALLY



LIVE
WISELY

LITERARY JOURNAL

*A Summer Reading Companion for
Thoughtful Readers and Growing Scholars*

STUDENT NAME: _____

GRADE (IN FALL): _____

DATE STARTED: _____

BOOK TITLE: _____





Welcome

TO YOUR CORNERSTONE

LITERARY JOURNAL

WHY WE READ AT CORNERSTONE

“Literature is the best introduction to life, for it shows us not only who we are, but who we are called to become.”

At Cornerstone, we believe great books form our minds, shape our hearts, and enlarge our souls. Through stories, we encounter courage, compassion, beauty, and truth—reflected in the human experience and pointing beyond ourselves.

This journal is your companion as you read deeply, think critically, and write thoughtfully. Use it to ask good questions, explore big ideas, and discover the timeless wisdom great authors have to teach us.



AS YOU READ, REMEMBER TO:



THINK DEEPLY
Notice the author's choices and the big ideas behind them.



ASK QUESTIONS
Curiosity opens the door to understanding and lifelong learning.



MAKE CONNECTIONS
Relate the story to your life, others, and the world around you.



SEEK TRUTH
Find what is good, true, and beautiful in the words you read and write.



Great books don't just tell us stories.
They teach us how to live.

TRUTH • VIRTUE • WISDOM



LITERARY ANALYSIS

— REFERENCE GUIDE —

A quick guide to the key elements we analyze in every great story.



Great literature invites us to think, feel, question, and grow. Use this guide throughout your reading and journal to analyze deeply and write insightfully.



CHARACTER

Who are the people in the story?

- What are the character's traits, motivations, and feelings?
- How does the character change (or not change)?



CONFLICT

What problem drives the story?

- What type of conflict is it (internal, external, or both)?
- How does the conflict develop and get resolved?



SETTING & CONTEXT

When and where does it happen?

- How does the setting influence the story?
- What historical, cultural, or social context is important?



LITERARY DEVICES

How does the author craft the story?

- What literary devices are used (e.g., symbolism, foreshadowing, irony, imagery)?
- How do these devices deepen meaning?



QUOTE ANALYSIS

What moments stand out?

- What important quotes capture key ideas?
- How does this quote reveal theme, character, or conflict?



THEME

What big ideas does the story explore?

- What central themes are present?
- What is the author saying about life, society, or human nature?



ETHICAL REFLECTION

What choices are at stake?

- What ethical or moral dilemmas are raised?
- What would you do in that situation? Why?



SOCRATIC REFLECTION

What questions does the story provoke?

- What questions does the story leave you with?
- How does it connect to truth, virtue, and the good life?



“The reading of all good books is like a conversation with the finest minds of past centuries.”

— RENÉ DESCARTES —



CHARACTER ANALYSIS



*Characters are the heart of every story.
Understanding them helps us understand the truth of the story.*



Writers build characters with depth and purpose. Great readers look beyond what a character says or does to understand why.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

AT A GLANCE



Who are they?
Identify the character.



What drives them?
Explore their motivations.



How do they change?
Look for growth, decisions, and challenges.



How do they impact others?
Consider their relationships.



What can we learn?
Connect their story to real life.

TYPES OF CHARACTERS



PROTAGONIST

The main character; often faces the central conflict.



ANTAGONIST

The character (or force) in opposition to the protagonist.



ROUND

A complex character who grows and changes.



STATIC

A character who stays the same throughout.



CHARACTER PROFILE

Character Name: _____

Role in the Story: _____

Physical Description: _____

Personality Traits: _____

Motivations / Goals: _____

Important Relationships: _____

TEXT EVIDENCE

Find 2–3 quotes or moments that reveal key details about this character.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____



DRAW OR PASTE A PICTURE OF YOUR CHARACTER

“The best characters feel like real people because they face real struggles, make real choices, and grow.”

LITERATURE REVEALS LIFE



CHARACTER PROFILE

KNOW THE PERSON. UNDERSTAND THE STORY.

*Great literature reveals truth through people.
Use this page to explore the character deeply and
consider how the author develops them.*

CHARACTER PORTRAIT



DRAW OR PASTE A PICTURE
OF YOUR CHARACTER

Character Name: _____

Role in the Story: _____

Age (if known): _____ Occupation / Status: _____

Physical Description: _____



PERSONALITY TRAITS

What words describe this character? Provide evidence from the text.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



MOTIVATIONS & GOALS

*What drives this character? What do they want?
How do their goals influence their actions?*



IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIPS

*Who are the most important people in this character's life?
How do these relationships shape them?*



HOW DOES THE CHARACTER CHANGE?

*Consider the beginning, middle, and end of the story.
How does this character grow (or not grow) as a result of the events?*



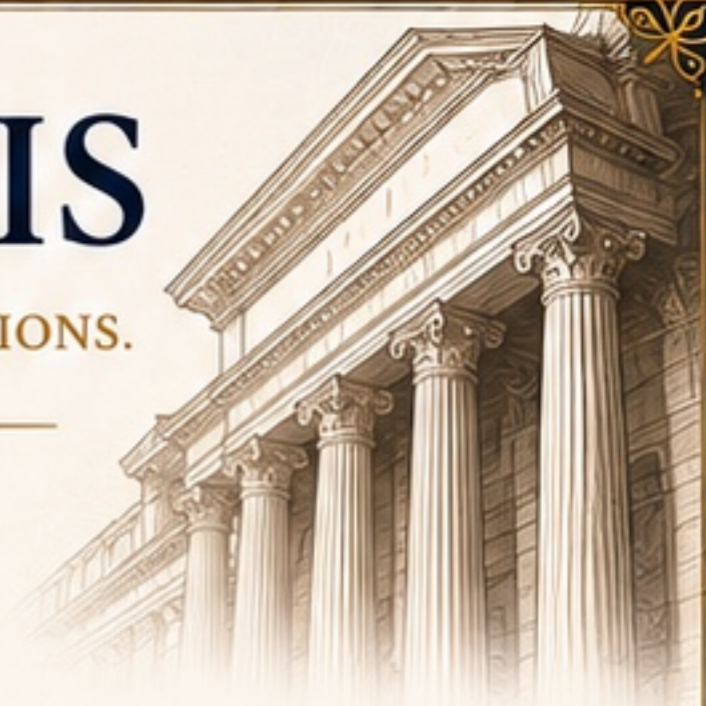
*“Study character, for it is in their choices
that the heart of the story is revealed.”*

— CORNERSTONE PREP ACADEMY —



STEAL ANALYSIS

CHARACTERS ARE REVEALED THROUGH THEIR ACTIONS.



Use the STEAL method to analyze key moments and gain a deeper understanding of the character.


THE STEAL METHOD

- S** **SPEECH**
 What does the character say? How do their words reveal their personality, values, or motivations?
- T** **THOUGHTS**
 What is the character thinking? What inner conflicts or beliefs are shown?
- E** **EFFECTS**
 How does the character impact others? What is the effect of their actions or choices?
- A** **ACTIONS**
 What does the character do? What choices do they make? What behaviors stand out?
- L** **LOOKS**
 What does the character look like? What expressions, body language, or appearance are described?

A character is known not by what they say, but by what they do when no one is watching.

CHARACTER: _____ **TEXT / CHAPTER:** _____

SCENE OR MOMENT: _____

STEAL ELEMENT	EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT (Quote or Describe)	WHAT THIS REVEALS (Analysis)
S  SPEECH	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
T  THOUGHTS	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
E  EFFECTS	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
A  ACTIONS	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
L  LOOKS	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>



OVERALL INSIGHT

What is the most important thing this analysis reveals about the character?



DEEPER ANALYSIS LEADS TO DEEPER UNDERSTANDING.

THINK CRITICALLY • READ CLOSELY • SEEK TRUTH



CHARACTER COMPARISON

COMPARE. CONTRAST. CONNECT.







Comparing characters helps us understand different perspectives, choices, and growth throughout a story.

CHARACTERS TO COMPARE

CHARACTER ONE: _____

VS.

CHARACTER TWO: _____

ASPECT TO COMPARE	CHARACTER ONE	CHARACTER TWO
 PERSONALITY What are their key traits and qualities?	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
 MOTIVATIONS What drives their actions and decisions?	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
 VALUES & BELIEFS What do they believe in?	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
 CHALLENGES What conflicts or obstacles do they face?	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
 GROWTH & CHANGE How do they grow or change by the end of the story?	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
 OVERALL IMPACT How do they impact the story and other characters?	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____

COMPARISON REFLECTION



- 1 What are the biggest similarities between these two characters?

- 2 What are the biggest differences between these two characters?

- 3 What can you learn from comparing these characters?



DIFFERENT CHARACTERS. DIFFERENT CHOICES. DEEPER UNDERSTANDING.

READ BOLDLY. THINK DEEPLY. LIVE WISELY.





CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN

GROWTH IS A CHOICE. CHARACTER IS BUILT OVER TIME.



Use what you've learned to imagine the future of this character and their continued journey.



LOOKING AHEAD

Where do you see this character in the future?
What might their life look like years from now?



GOALS & ASPIRATIONS

What are some goals this character might have?
What do they hope to achieve?



LESSONS LEARNED

What are the most important lessons this character has learned?
How have these lessons shaped who they are?





ADVICE FROM THIS CHARACTER

If this character could give advice to others, what would they say?
What words of wisdom would they share based on their experiences?



IMPACT ON OTHERS

How does this character impact the people around them?
What kind of legacy might they leave behind?



YOUR REFLECTION

What have you learned about yourself through studying this character?
How might their story inspire you to be a better version of yourself?



“ Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are. ”

— JOHN WOODEN



BUILD CHARACTER. IMPACT THE WORLD.

KNOW THE PERSON • UNDERSTAND THE STORY • LIVE THE LESSONS



CONFLICT FRAMEWORK



EVERY GREAT STORY HAS STRUGGLE.

Conflict drives the plot, reveals the characters, and creates meaningful change.

TYPES OF CONFLICT



MAN vs. MAN
A character struggles against another character.



MAN vs. NATURE
A character struggles against a natural force or environment.



MAN vs. SOCIETY
A character struggles against societal rules, traditions, or the law.



MAN vs. SELF
A character struggles with an internal conflict, decision, or belief.



MAN vs. FATE
A character struggles against destiny, fate, or the unknown.

“Out of conflict comes strength. Out of struggle comes character.”

— UNKNOWN



IDENTIFYING CONFLICT IN THE TEXT

What is the main conflict in the story?

Which type(s) of conflict are present? (Check all that apply.)

MAN vs. MAN MAN vs. NATURE MAN vs. SOCIETY MAN vs. SELF MAN vs. FATE

How does the conflict shape the plot and drive the story forward?

CONFLICT ANALYSIS CHART

STAGE	WHAT HAPPENS? (Brief Description)	WHO IS INVOLVED?	HOW DOES IT AFFECT THE STORY?
 EXPOSITION The conflict is introduced.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
 RISING ACTION The conflict intensifies.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
 CLIMAX The turning point or peak.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
 RESOLUTION The conflict is resolved.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

CONFLICT REFLECTION



What lesson about life or human nature does this conflict reveal?

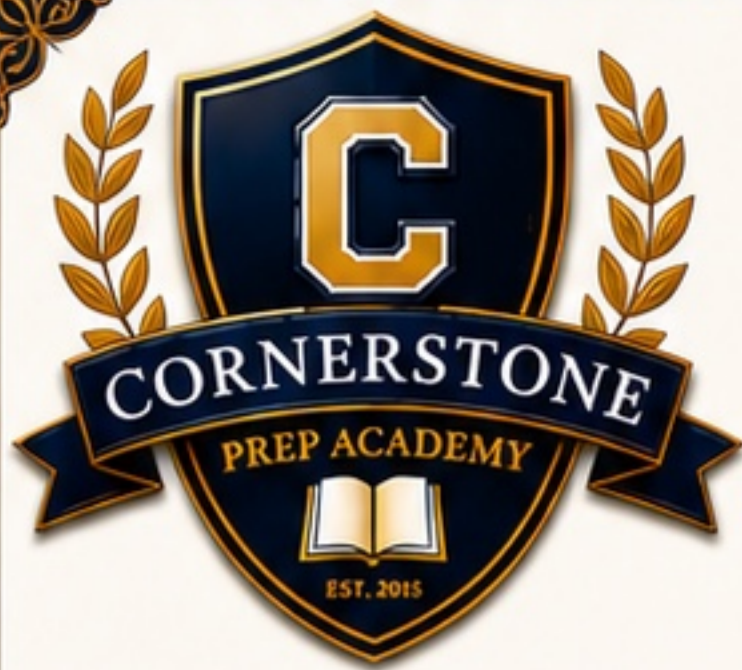
How does the resolution of the conflict change the characters?

What would the story be like without this conflict?

“The difficulties we face in life do not come to stop us, but to help us discover who we are.”

— CORNERSTONE PREP ACADEMY —





CONFLICT REFLECTION

EVERY STRUGGLE TEACHES. EVERY CHOICE REVEALS.
EVERY STORY TRANSFORMS.



*Reflect on the conflict in this story
and the meaning it holds.*

CONFLICT AT A GLANCE

What is the central conflict in this story?

Who is most affected by this conflict?

What forces or beliefs are at odds?

What is at stake for the character(s)?

How does this conflict challenge who they are?

“Out of conflict comes clarity.”
— UNKNOWN



LOOKING DEEPER

Why do you think the author chose to include this conflict?

What does this conflict reveal about the world, society, or time period in the story?

How does the conflict reveal something important about the character(s)?

How does the conflict connect to larger ideas or real-life issues?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

What did this conflict teach you about yourself?

Have you ever faced a similar conflict in your own life? What happened?

What would you do if you were in the character's place?

GROWTH & CHANGE

How does this conflict contribute to the growth or change of the character(s)?



LASTING IMPACT

What is the lasting impact of this conflict on the character(s) and the story?

FINAL REFLECTION

What is the most important lesson or takeaway from this conflict?
How will you remember this story because of it?





SETTING & HISTORICAL CONTEXT

EVERY STORY LIVES IN A PLACE.
EVERY PLACE SHAPES THE STORY.

Understanding the setting and context helps us understand the choices, conflicts, and truths within the story.



UNDERSTANDING THE SETTING

The setting includes where and when the story takes place, as well as the social, cultural, and historical world surrounding the characters.

Where does the story take place? (Be specific)

When does the story take place?

What is the mood or atmosphere of the setting?



TIME PERIOD & CONTEXT

Describe the historical time period of the story.

What were important events, movements, or conditions occurring during this time?

How might these events or conditions influence the story and the characters?



THE WORLD OF THE STORY

PHYSICAL SETTING

Describe the key locations in the story. What do they look like? What is important about them?

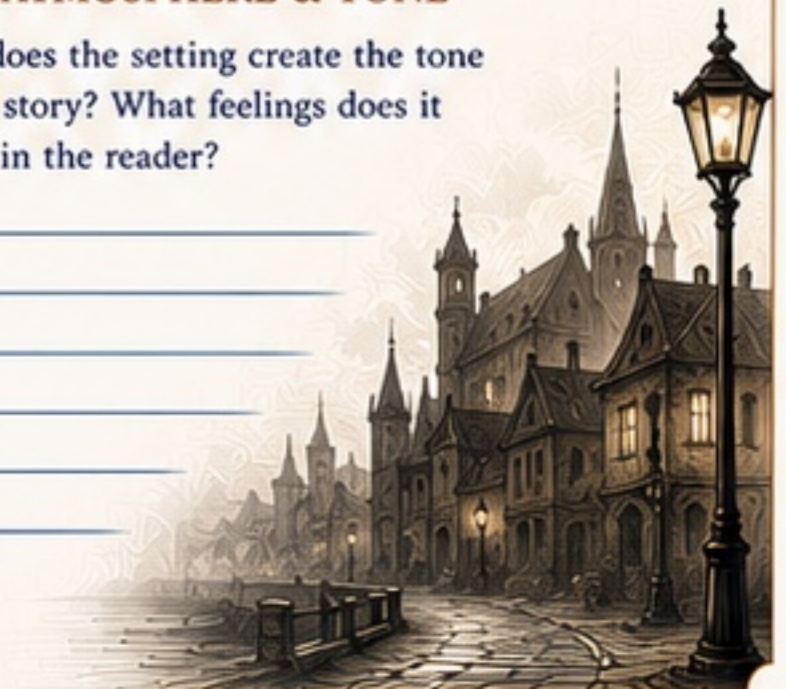


SOCIAL & CULTURAL CONTEXT

What are the social structures, traditions, customs, or beliefs of this world? How do they affect the characters and their choices?

ATMOSPHERE & TONE

How does the setting create the tone of the story? What feelings does it evoke in the reader?



HISTORICAL & CULTURAL INFLUENCES

What historical, cultural, or societal forces shape the world of the story?



How do these influences impact the characters, their conflicts, or the themes of the story?



FINAL REFLECTION

How does the setting deepen your understanding of the story?

What details about the world of the story are most important—and why?



“The world is more than a backdrop—it is part of the story.”

PAY ATTENTION TO THE PLACE.
IT HAS SOMETHING TO TEACH YOU.





LITERARY DEVICES

TOOLS OF THE WRITER. MEANING FOR THE READER.

*Writers don't just tell stories—
they craft them with purpose.
Literary devices create depth, emphasize meaning,
and bring the story to life.*



WHY AUTHORS USE LITERARY DEVICES

Authors use literary devices to:

- ✓ Reveal meaning beyond the surface
- ✓ Create vivid imagery and sensory detail
- ✓ Develop mood and atmosphere
- ✓ Build tension and emphasize ideas
- ✓ Connect with readers emotionally
- ✓ Make complex ideas memorable

“
The art of writing is the art of discovering what you believe.
—GUSTAVE FLAUBERT



FIND & IDENTIFY

Identify at least 3 literary devices used in the text. For each, write the quote, name the device, and explain its effect.

- 1 QUOTE: _____
DEVICE: _____
EFFECT: _____
- 2 QUOTE: _____
DEVICE: _____
EFFECT: _____
- 3 QUOTE: _____
DEVICE: _____
EFFECT: _____



COMMON LITERARY DEVICES

DEVICE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE FROM TEXT
IMAGERY	Descriptive language that appeals to the senses.	_____
METAPHOR	A comparison without using "like" or "as."	_____
SIMILE	A comparison using "like" or "as."	_____
SYMBOLISM	Using symbols to represent ideas.	_____
FORESHADOWING	Hints or clues about what is to come.	_____
IRONY	A contrast between expectation and reality.	_____
PERSONIFICATION	Giving human qualities to nonhuman things.	_____
ALLUSION	A reference to a person, place, event, or work.	_____
HYPERBOLE	Exaggerated statements not meant to be taken literally.	_____
TONE	The author's attitude conveyed through word choice.	_____

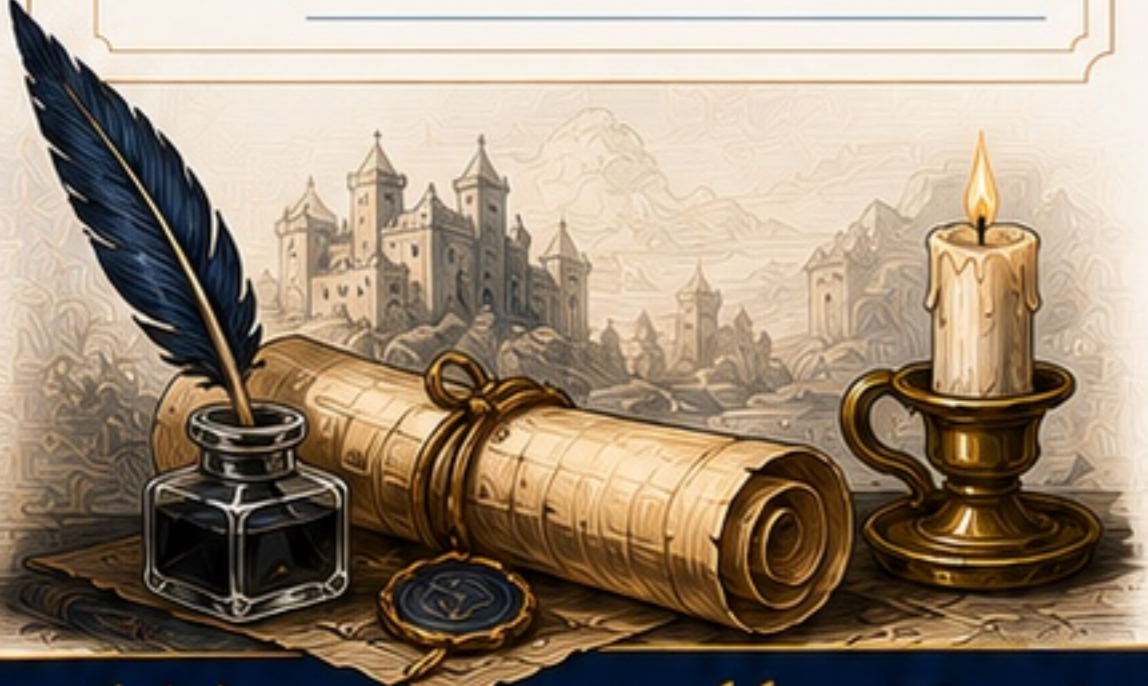
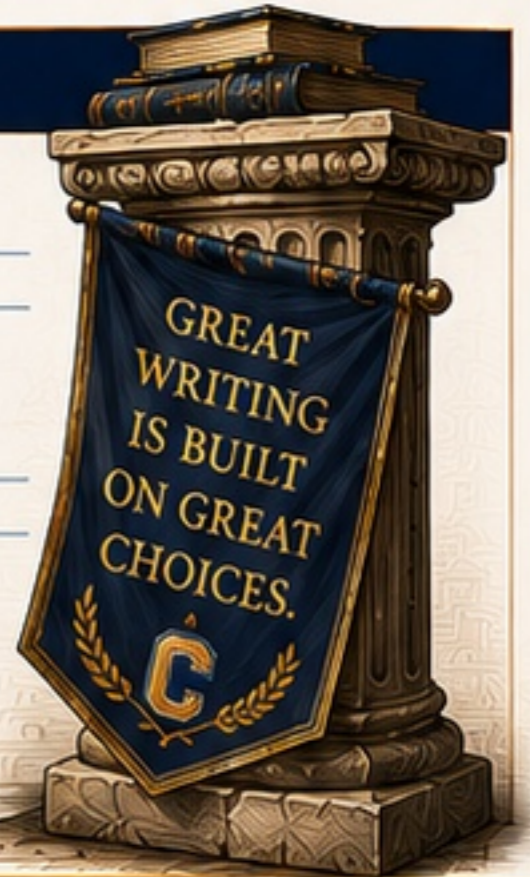


THINK DEEPER

Which literary device had the greatest impact on you—and why?

How do these devices help shape the theme or message of the story?

If the author removed these devices, how would the story be different?



“ *The writer's toolbox is filled with devices.
The wise writer knows when—and how—to use them.*

THE THOUGHTFUL READER KNOWS HOW TO RECOGNIZE THEM.



PLOT DIAGRAM

EVERY STORY FOLLOWS A JOURNEY.
EVERY JOURNEY REVEALS MEANING.

*The plot is the structure of the story—
the sequence of events that shapes the characters
and reveals the theme.*



THE FIVE STAGES OF PLOT

1 EXPOSITION

The beginning.
We meet the characters,
learn the setting,
and understand the
situation before the
conflict begins.

2 RISING ACTION

The buildup.
A series of events,
conflicts, and
choices increase
tension and
complicate the
situation.

3 CLIMAX

The turning point.
The moment of
greatest tension,
conflict, or decision
that changes
everything.

4 FALLING ACTION

The unraveling.
The consequences
of the climax
begin to unfold.
Loose ends are
tied and tensions
begin to resolve.

5 RESOLUTION

The conclusion.
The conflict is
resolved and a
new equilibrium
is reached.
We see the
final impact.



HOW THE PLOT DIAGRAM SUPPORTS...

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEME

The plot is the vehicle that delivers the theme.
Each stage reveals part of the central message.

- 1 EXPOSITION Introduces the world and the underlying ideas or values. → _____
- 2 RISING ACTION The theme is explored through conflicts and challenges. → _____
- 3 CLIMAX The theme is tested in the most critical moment. → _____
- 4 FALLING ACTION The consequences reveal the meaning of the climax. → _____
- 5 RESOLUTION The theme is affirmed, clarified, or left for us to ponder. → _____



*The
structure
gives
meaning.*

*The
meaning
gives
purpose.*

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHARACTER

Characters grow, change, and are revealed
through the events of the plot.

- 1 EXPOSITION We meet the characters and understand who they are. → _____
- 2 RISING ACTION They face challenges that test their beliefs and choices. → _____
- 3 CLIMAX Their true character is revealed in the decisive moment. → _____
- 4 FALLING ACTION We see the impact of their choices and growth. → _____
- 5 RESOLUTION They are changed—or remain the same. → _____

REFLECT & CONNECT



At which stage is the theme most clearly revealed in your text? Why?



How does the main character change (or not change) throughout the plot?



How do the events of the plot help communicate the author's message?

*Plot is the
skeleton;
theme is the soul;
character is
the heart.*

— LITERARY WISDOM

“ Stories move us because they take us on a journey—
not just across time and place, but toward truth. ”

UNDERSTAND THE JOURNEY.
DISCOVER THE MEANING.



GREAT
STORIES
EXPLORE
CONFLICT.

GREAT
THEMES
REVEAL
TRUTH.

WE LOOK
BEYOND
THE PLOT
TO DISCOVER
WHAT
ENDURES.

THAT IS
THE POWER
OF THEME.

THEME

THE HEART OF THE STORY.

While the plot tells *what* happens and the characters show us *how*, the theme reveals *why* it matters.

“ Themes are the threads that connect stories to life. ”

— E. D. HIRSCH, JR.

IN THIS SECTION, WE WILL...



IDENTIFY

the central theme of the work.



ANALYZE

how the theme is developed.



CONNECT

the theme to the human experience.



EVALUATE

the author's message and purpose.



REFLECT

on the theme's relevance in our world today.

BEYOND THE STORY. TOWARD TRUTH.

Every great story leaves us with more than entertainment—it leaves us with understanding.

THEMES
DO NOT CHANGE.
THEY ENDURE.





THEME ANALYSIS TRACKER

TRACK THE THREADS. UNCOVER THE TRUTH. APPLY IT TO LIFE.

A theme is not just a topic—it is a universal truth revealed through the story. Use this tracker to explore, analyze, and apply the themes of your novel.



IDENTIFY & DEFINE THE THEMES

List the central themes in the story and define each in your own words.

THEME	DEFINITION	EVIDENCE / EXAMPLES FROM THE TEXT
1	_____	• _____ • _____ • _____
2	_____	• _____ • _____ • _____
3	_____	• _____ • _____ • _____
4	_____	• _____ • _____ • _____



THEME SIGNIFICANCE

Why is each theme important to the story?
What message or insight does it reveal?

1 _____

2 _____

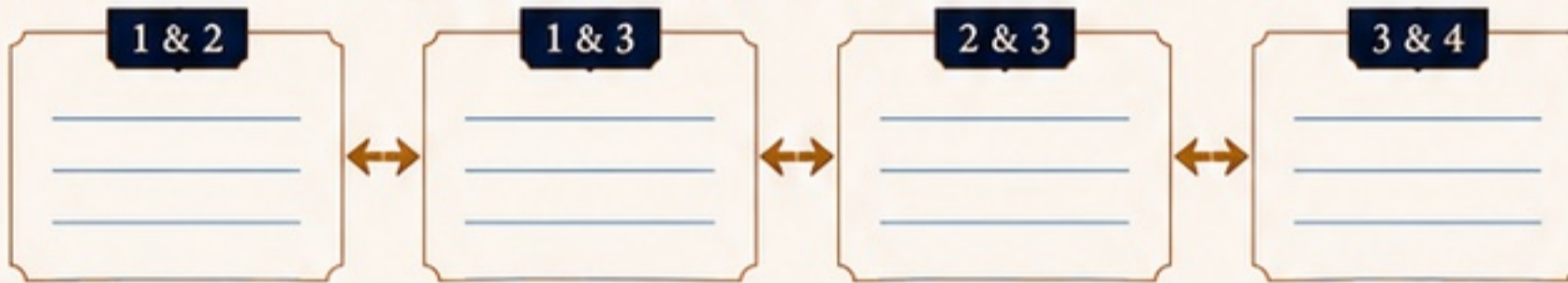
3 _____

4 _____



CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THEMES

How are the themes in this story related to one another?
Do they support, contrast, or build upon each other?



“Great themes do not speak only to one time or place—they speak to the human heart across all time.”



REAL WORLD APPLICATION

How do the themes of this story connect to the world today?
What lessons can be applied to your own life?



What does this theme teach us about human nature?



How does this theme challenge our choices or beliefs?



What emotions or values does this theme touch?



How can this theme inspire action or growth?



THEME EVOLUTION

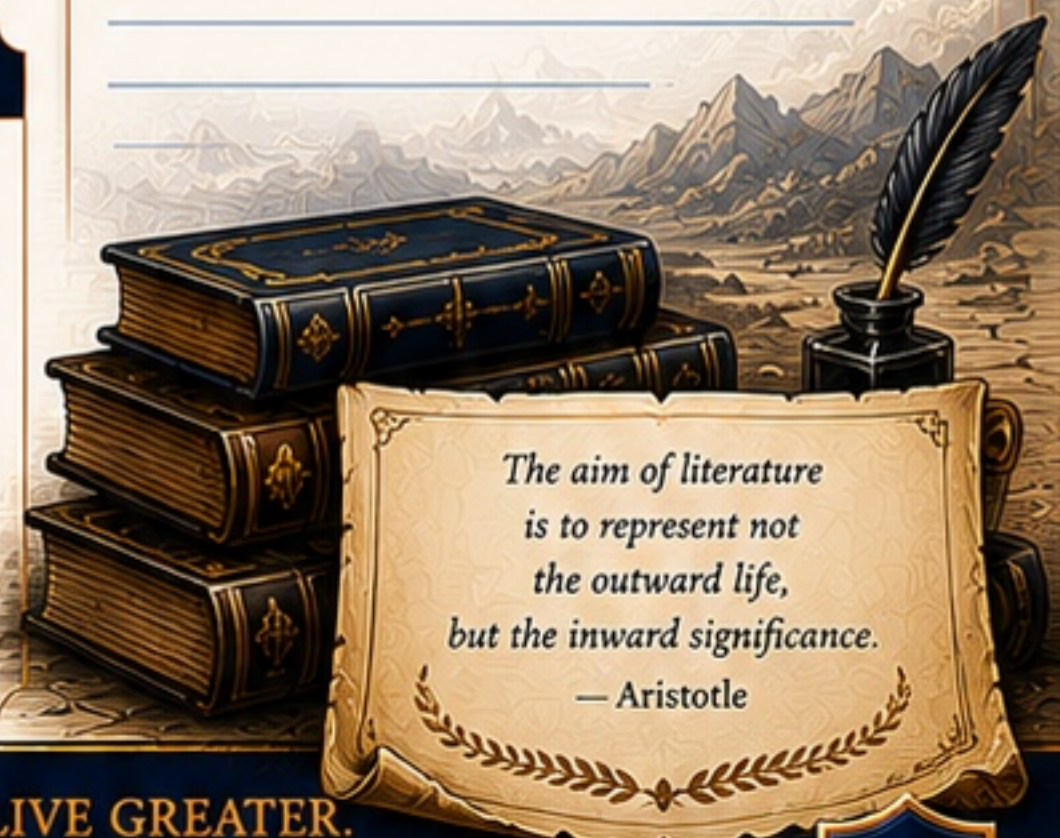
How does the author develop the theme(s) throughout the story?
Do they change, deepen, or remain consistent?

BEGINNING:

MIDDLE:

END:

OVERALL:



The aim of literature is to represent not the outward life, but the inward significance.
— Aristotle



LOOK DEEPER.
The theme is the soul of the story.

THINK WIDER.
The theme connects us all.

LIVE GREATER.
The theme calls us to something more.



MORAL DILEMMA

WHEN THERE IS NO EASY CHOICE.
CHARACTER IS REVEALED IN THE CONFLICT WITHIN.



A moral dilemma is a situation in which every option has a cost. Great literature explores the choices that test our values and define who we are.



WHAT IS A MORAL DILEMMA?

A moral dilemma occurs when a character must choose between two (or more) options, each of which has positive and negative consequences. There is no clearly right answer—only a choice that reveals their values, priorities, and character.



THE DILEMMA IN THE STORY

Describe the moral dilemma faced by the character(s).

Who faces this dilemma?

When does it occur in the story?



CORE VALUES AT STAKE

List the core values, beliefs, or principles in conflict.



Which value is most important to the character? Why?



THE OPTIONS

What choices are available to the character? What are the potential outcomes of each?

A OPTION A

What is this choice?

Potential Positive Outcomes

• _____
• _____
• _____

Potential Negative Consequences

• _____
• _____
• _____

B OPTION B

What is this choice?

Potential Positive Outcomes

• _____
• _____
• _____

Potential Negative Consequences

• _____
• _____
• _____

NO EASY CHOICE

“
The greatest conflicts are not between right and wrong, but between two rights.
”



IMPACT ON THE CHARACTER



HOW DOES THIS CHOICE SHAPE THEM?

What does this decision reveal about the character's values, strengths, or weaknesses?



HOW DOES IT CHANGE THEIR RELATIONSHIPS?

How does the choice affect the character's relationships with others?



HOW DOES IT MOVE THE PLOT FORWARD?

How does this decision impact the events of the story and future conflicts?



WHAT IS THE PERSONAL COST?

What does the character give up—emotionally, physically, or morally—as a result of their choice?



REFLECT & CONNECT



If you were in the character's position, what choice would you make? Why?



How does this dilemma challenge your own values or beliefs?



What does this story suggest about right, wrong, and human nature?

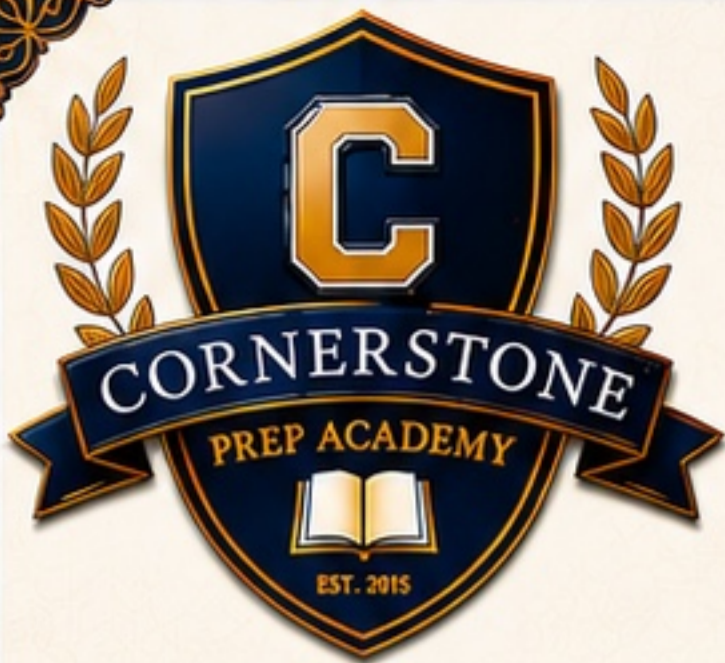
We do not learn who we are by what we win, but by the choices we must make when no choice is easy.



“
Ethics is knowing the difference between what you have a right to do and what is right to do.
— POTTER STEWART

GREAT STORIES CHALLENGE US
TO THINK DEEPLY AND CHOOSE WISELY.

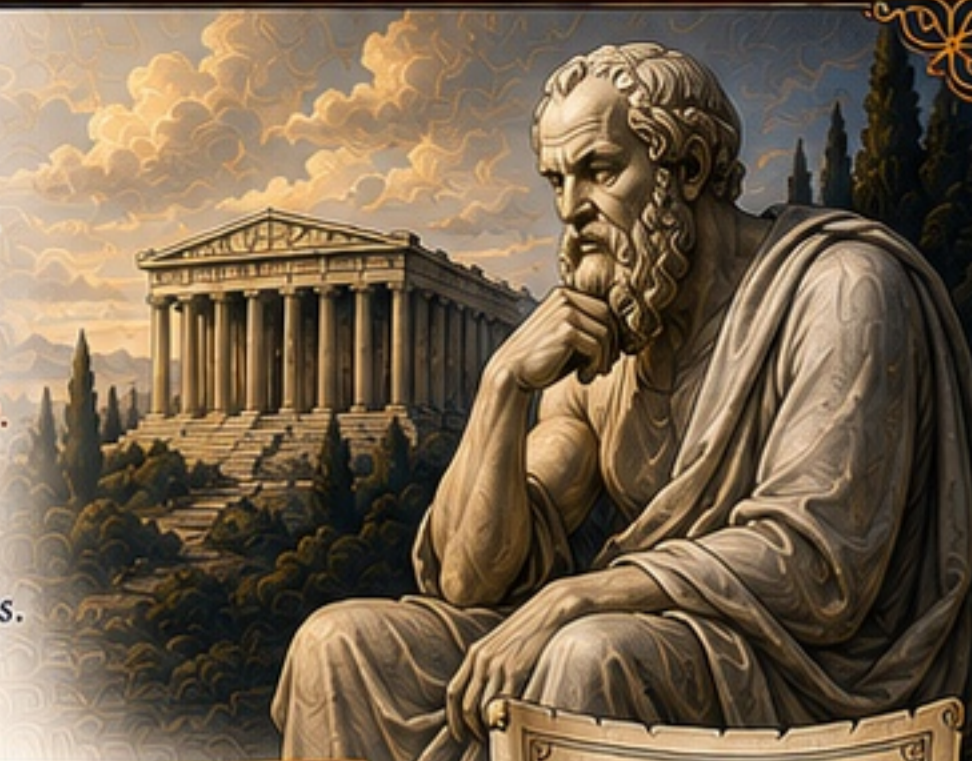




SOCRATIC REFLECTION

QUESTION. THINK. EXPLORE. UNDERSTAND.

Socratic reflection challenges us to look deeper, think clearly, and seek wisdom through thoughtful questions. There are no easy answers—only better understanding.

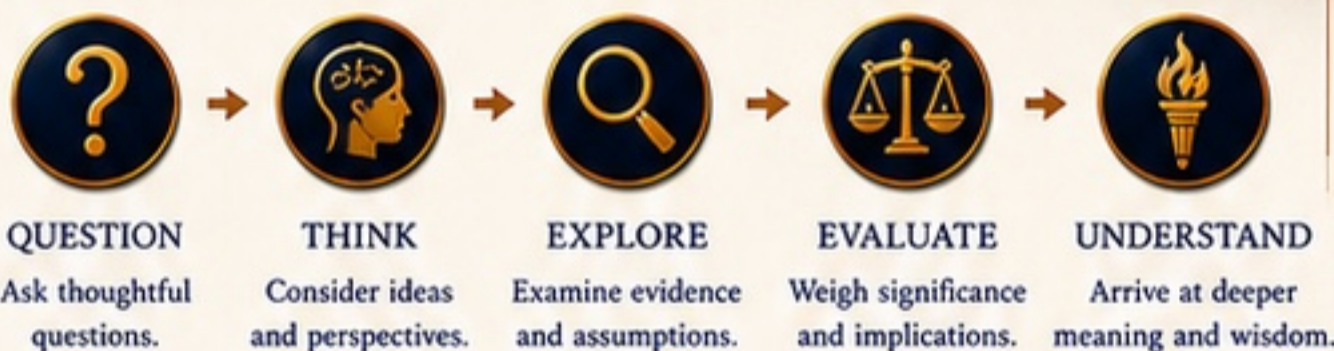


THE UNEXAMINED LIFE IS NOT WORTH LIVING.
—SOCRATES

WHAT IS SOCRATIC REFLECTION?

Socratic reflection is the practice of asking deep, purposeful questions to examine ideas, beliefs, choices, and the human experience. It helps us move beyond assumptions to discover truth and meaning.

THE SOCRATIC PROCESS



QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE

Use these guiding questions to reflect on the text, characters, themes, and your own ideas.

ABOUT THE TEXT	What is really happening in this story? What is the author trying to help us understand? _____
ABOUT THE CHARACTERS	What do the characters value most? Why do they make the choices they make? _____
ABOUT THEMES & IDEAS	What larger ideas or truths does this story explore? What does this reveal about human nature? _____
ABOUT THE WORLD	How does this story connect to the world today? What lessons can be applied to real life? _____
ABOUT YOURSELF	What does this story challenge you to think about? How does it shape your beliefs or decisions? _____

SOCRATIC DEEP DIVE

- What assumptions are being made in the story? Are they always true? Why or why not?

- What would happen if someone made a different choice? How might the story—and its meaning—change?

- What is the most important question this story raises? How does the author invite us to keep thinking?



APPLY & ACT

After your reflection, what insight or truth will you carry forward? How will this understanding influence your choices and actions?

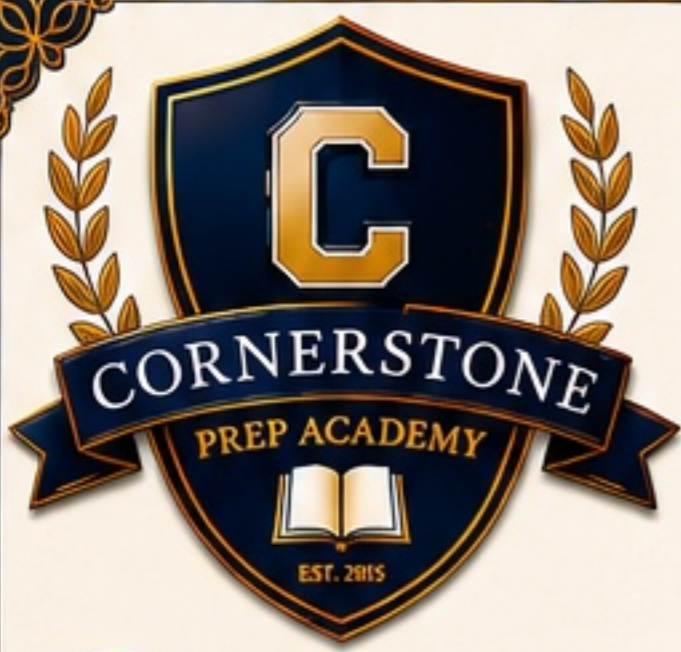


WISDOM BEGINS IN WONDER. REFLECTION LEADS TO GROWTH. TRUTH SETS US FREE.

“The highest form of human excellence is to question oneself and others.”
—SOCRATES

KEEP QUESTIONING. KEEP THINKING. KEEP GROWING.

STAY CURIOUS Never stop asking important questions.	THINK CRITICALLY Examine ideas with clarity and courage.	SEEK TRUTH Look beyond surface answers.	ACT WISELY Let understanding guide your choices.	LIVE MEANINGFULLY Apply what you learn to make a difference.	
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LITERARY ESSAY

— ARGUE. ANALYZE. INSPIRE. —

A strong essay does more than describe a story— it makes a claim, supports it with evidence, and reveals meaning through thoughtful analysis.



WHAT IS A LITERARY ESSAY?

A literary essay is a focused, written argument about a text. You present a clear claim about the text and support it with evidence from the text, analysis, and logical reasoning.

“*Good writing is clear thinking made visible.*”
— BILL WHELAN

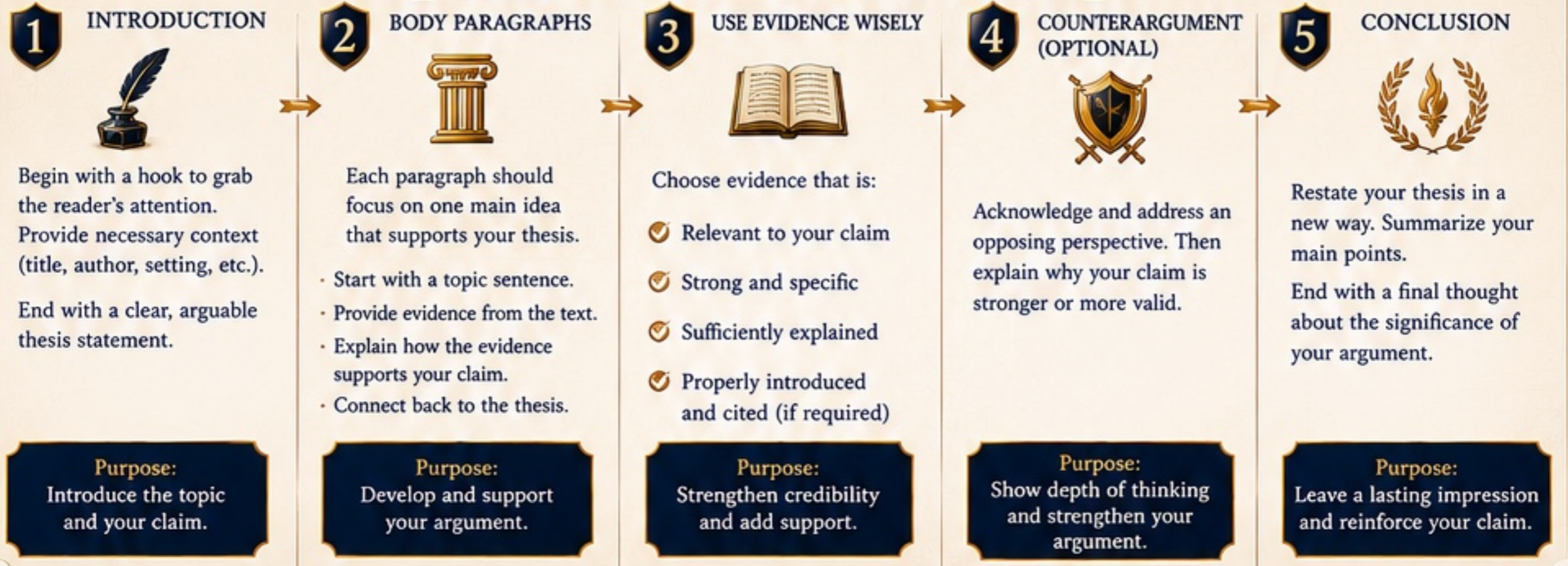
THE GOAL

- ✔ Make a clear, arguable claim.
- ✔ Support your claim with strong evidence from the text.
- ✔ Analyze how the evidence supports your claim.
- ✔ Explain the significance of your analysis (so what?).
- ✔ Write with clarity, focus, and purpose.

KEY QUALITIES OF A STRONG ESSAY

- **FOCUSED** – Stays on topic and fully develops the claim.
- **EVIDENCE-BASED** – Uses relevant and accurate textual evidence.
- **ANALYTICAL** – Explains how and why the evidence supports the claim.
- **ORGANIZED** – Follows a logical structure with smooth transitions.
- **INSIGHTFUL** – Reveals deeper meaning about the text and the human experience.

THE ESSAY FRAMEWORK



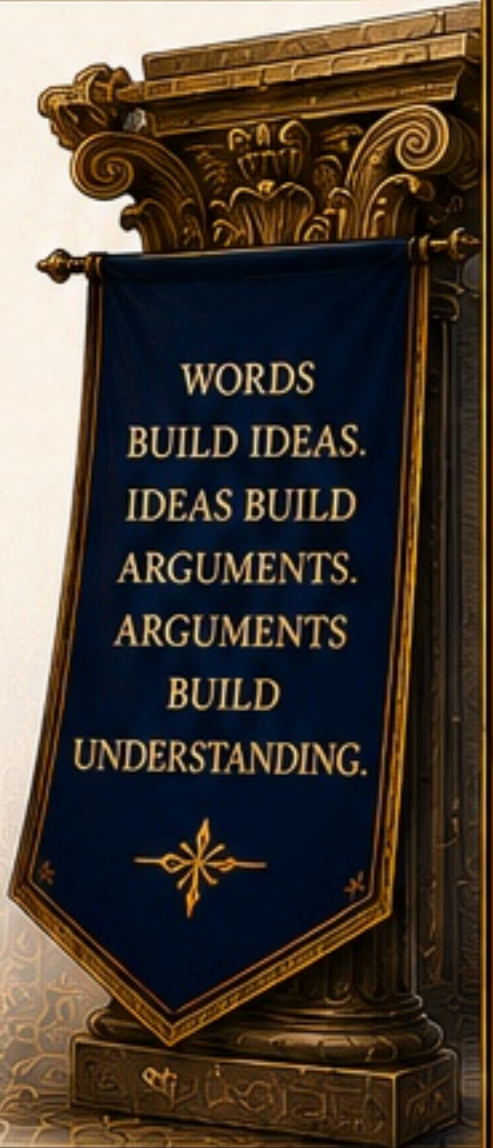
ESSAY CHECKLIST

- I have a clear, arguable thesis.
- Every body paragraph has a focused topic sentence.
- I use specific evidence from the text.
- I explain how each piece of evidence supports my claim.
- My ideas flow logically from one paragraph to the next.
- I address the significance of my analysis (so what?).
- My conclusion ties everything together.
- I check for grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
- My essay shows my voice, insight, and best effort.



WRITING TIPS

- BE SPECIFIC**
Use precise details and quotes. Specific evidence leads to strong analysis.
- ANALYZE, DON'T SUMMARIZE**
Go beyond what happened. Explore how and why it matters.
- USE TRANSITIONS**
Use words and phrases (however, moreover, in contrast, therefore, etc.) to connect your ideas.
- WRITE FOR YOUR READER**
Explain your thinking clearly so your reader can follow your argument.
- REVISE AND REFINE**
Great essays are written... and rewritten.



YOUR VOICE. YOUR IDEAS. YOUR IMPACT.

A literary essay is your opportunity to join the conversation, challenge ideas, and reveal truth through the power of words.

