

# IN-CLASS ESSAYS

One of the goals of the English class curricula is to prepare students to write extemporaneously. In general, academia occasionally requires students to craft in one sitting an analytical essay that responds to an assigned prompt, supports a single main idea—a specific arguable thesis—with carefully developed evidence and reasoning, reveals control of sentence and paragraph structure, and employs an appropriate organizational scheme.

## Strategies for In-class Essay Writing

### Prewrite:

- Make sure you understand the question being asked!
- Annotate the text to collect evidence that might allow you to answer the question.
- Don't think; WRITE!
  - WEDGE for five minutes, or until you get to an answer to the question.
- *Create a Working Thesis*: it must be a specific arguable claim, usually in the form of a cause and effect (C→E) statement.

N.B. If the question is general or open-ended, you must still craft a specific response! For example, if the question is "Explore the ways in which the story reveals character," work to generate a focused working thesis similar to "Professor Schadenfreude's role as an evil antagonist is revealed through hypocritical internal monologues, the opinions of other characters, his villainous actions, and dark symbols associated with the character."

- *Outline*: Craft working body ¶TSs in emphatic order. Remember: each body ¶TS should also present a C→E claim.

### Draft:

- Double-space lines to leave room for tidy revision.
- Begin on the first page by writing the working thesis 1/3 of the way down the page, to leave room for filling in an intro later.
- Draft body paragraphs. Provide
  - context for specific evidence
  - specific evidence in the form of textual quotations
  - citations for each quotation
  - specific reasoning to explain the links between evidence and claims
  - appropriate literary terms
  - anticipations of and rebuttals to opposing points of view.
- Draft the introduction (do not forget a complete identification of a primary text) the conclusion, and the title (consider employing the title-within-title convention).

### Revise:

- Tidy up body paragraphs for unity and clarity. Also, render informal language formal.
- Revise body ¶TSs to add transitions and strengthen C→E claims.
- As a final step, revise the thesis to match the ¶TSs.

### Proofread!:

- Proofread vigorously and thoroughly. Make changes as tidily as you can.