

Writing a literature essay

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What is a literature essay about

1. Personal argument/view on a specific aspect or aspects of a work of literature that you have studied.

* Not a summary or re-telling of the story, poem, etc.

- Sheds insight/critical thinking.

2. Structured

- well-constructed

- There is an introduction, body and conclusion.

- The introduction states the thesis/argument/view on the question.

- It details what the essay is about.

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- The body develops the argument.
- It provides details/evidence for the argument/view.
- The evidence comes from the text.
- The body is divided into paragraphs.
- Each paragraph discusses one distinct point.
- The paragraphs are coherent/well-linked.
- The points are not repeated.

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- The conclusion sums up the argument.
- It refers back to the introduction.
- It does not raise/introduce new points.

Paragraph - PEEL



Conventions and style

- A literary essay must adhere/conform to expected standards.
 1. It is written in the historic present (present tense).
 2. It is written in formal style. (No informal language, slang or colloquial language).
- Full sentences
- No rhetorical questions
- No contractions
- 3. It is written in third person (No 'I', 'We', etc.)

Example of an introduction

It is true that the characters we encounter can change us, sometimes so profoundly that we are not the same afterwards.

Critically discuss the validity of this statement in relation to Pi.

Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400-450 words (2-2 ½ pages).

Answer

Life of Pi is a story of survival in the face of a traumatic ordeal. The main character, Piscine Molitor Patel, simply known as Pi, encounters numerous characters from whom he learns so much that help him survive being stranded in the Pacific Ocean. This essay discusses the characters that impact Pi's life profoundly. Pi meets Francis Adirubasamy who teaches him how to swim, Mr Kumar, his biology teacher, Mr Kumar, a baker, the French cook and Richard Parker, a Bengal tiger that becomes his companion throughout his ordeal.