

Question 3 Free Response Notes



General Tips

- **ALWAYS** write in the present tense: literary present tense is always right.
- Read the whole prompt carefully. Almost every prompt in the past twenty years has asked for an assessment of the 'meaning of the whole' of the work; don't forget to include this in your speech.
- Do not summarize. Each detail that you include from the original work should be evidence of your thesis and topic sentence claims.
- Ignore the list of selected works, but make a good choice. Avoid works that Myrna is likely to question (fantasy/sci-fi, teen literature, obscure texts) unless you must choose that title.

SAMPLE OPENING SENTENCE

Battered blind in a boxing ring, the Invisible Man soon discovers that the true definition of blindness lies within his own limited perception of himself.

Introduction and Thesis Statement

- Keep the introductions brief and to the point. Generally, you don't want to exceed 3-4 sentences.
- Begin with an engaging specific anecdote that draws the reader into the piece.
- **AVOID**
 - general statements about human nature or literature unless they are **fascinating**.
 - using the author and/or title as the opening of the first sentence.
 - using a quotation to open the piece.
- Let the author do the heavy lifting. Odds are that the author of the piece had an interesting or engaging story inside the piece that will offer an effective introduction.
- The introduction should include the author's full name and the title of the piece.
- Your thesis should be an engaging, interesting argument that raises a controversial question

SIMPLE THREE PART INTRO

- Anecdote
- Bridge to Thesis
- Thesis

SAMPLE THESIS

Although Huck is raised in a Southern culture that demands conformity to the idea that African-Americans are less than human, the conflict Huck faces between this culture and his own friendship with Jim reveals the importance of following one's own conscience.

Body of the Essay

- It's critical to remember that your topic sentences should be arguments, not plot-driven.
- Every element of the plot (data) that you include should be analyzed (claim) and connect to the claims that you make in your thesis and topic sentences (warrant).
- Demonstrate knowledge of the text by including brief references to critical
- One useful structure for body paragraphs is a strong topic sentence with two sub-topics, each supported by details from the text. For example:
 - Topic Sentence: Huck has been raised to believe that African-Americans are nothing more than property to be owned and sold.
 - Subtopic 1: The Southern culture depicted by Twain uses the law and education to enforce the idea of black inferiority.
 - Subtopic 2: Even the morally upright people that Huck knows teach him that slavery is necessary and morally correct.