The Research Paper in 10 steps (RP = 30% of final grade: this means that if you earn below C on the RP, you will most likely not pass this class with a C or better as a final grade.)

The above policy may seem harsh, and some students in ENC 1102 perceive the research paper (RP) as a major roadblock to passing English II, but that’s not the case in this class. The RP is a literary criticism-based paper, and we keep it short (1200 words, not counting quotes), neat (typewritten), organized (periodic due dates are given for stages in the process), and interesting (you may relate the main idea of the literary work to our lives today).

Ideally, the RP should give your interpretation of the book as shaped by the literary critics’ insights.

To combine your interpretation with the critics’, you should keep an open mind about the book’s theme until you have read the book and at least three critical articles. Use a pencil to mark important passages of the book and the articles as you read because I ask you to use at least three quotes from the book and three from the research. Listed below is a step-by-step process that you can follow to complete this assignment successfully.

1. Buy a folder with pockets.

2. Choose a novel to read for your paper. A list of novels (a few are non-fiction) is attached to the syllabus, and I suggest that you try one of these, but the piece of literature also can be a collection of short stories by one author, a book of poems by one poet, a lengthy play, or a novel not on the list but approved by me. If you like an author whose work is in our Lit book, you can often find additional stories, poems, and plays in the HCC or public libraries. Whatever piece of literature you choose for the research paper, you need to make sure that critics have written about the book and that you can find their articles (the research). If you’re uncertain about your choice, talk to me and I’ll let you know if I think it’s a good choice. Also, I would like for you to choose a book that you did not cover in high school or another college class.

Regarding the critical (research) articles you will need, almost all of the novels on the attached list have research available, but my suggestion is to choose three to five titles of books and then go online and/or to the library or a bookstore to learn something about the contents of the book and to see what research is available. Remember that the online Literature Criticism Online (Gale) and Literature Resources from Gale (LRG) via LINCCWEB are the first places to look for research. Our library orientation also will familiarize you with other sources. Please learn to use the online research available through HCC before doing other online searches. Some of the online articles found through a search on Google or Yahoo may range from very good to awful, but the academic community, which you are now a part of, does not consider many of these articles legitimate literary criticism.

As you read the book chosen for the RP project, it is useful to read with a pen or pencil in hand and mark the margins (if you own the book) for important passages and/or keep a brief written journal of plot and your reactions to the characters etc.

Optional Bonus Assignment: Keeping a journal as you read a book is difficult to do because it slows your reading and seems a chore at times, but it probably makes writing the RP a breeze, especially if in your journal you apply the formalist method of thematic analysis and use the terms (setting, characters, plot, conflict/resolution, symbolism, themes) you learned for Essay #1. If you keep such a journal as your read and it totals about 5 pages (handwritten is fine as long as
there are 150 words to the page), **you may receive a bonus of up to 5% on the final grade of your RP.** I will not evaluate the journal on mechanical correctness or neatness, but you should do your best to make it college-level writing. If the journal is too rough in content or mechanics, the 5% bonus will dwindle to 0%. Try to write in one page segments you read the book. One-half of the page may briefly summarize the plot, and the other half should provide your reaction to the characters, plot, etc.

**NOTE:** If there is a movie on the book you choose, you may or may not want to see the film to see what interpretation the movie’s director gave to the book. Sometimes seeing the film can give you ideas for your thesis (an interpretation of the whole work).

3. Collect and read a **minimum of three sources of research. Two sources** should be **scholarly articles** from an academic journal, book, or a compilation of literary criticism such as Literary Gale sources. One source should be biographical. If you are unable to find two scholarly articles, you may substitute book reviews.

**NOTE:** Some of the articles found in the online LRG are **overview articles (summaries)** and not officially literary criticism. **You may use one of these overview articles towards the three that you need, but at least one article should be literary criticism.** These critical articles typically deal with a theme of the book or some specialized feature of the book. Sometimes the overview articles also contain criticism, but often they do not. Once you find a list of articles on LRG, the column on the far right tells you what type of article.

Save or Print the research articles or read them in the library and take good notes. Put the printouts and/or notes in your research paper folder.

Cliffs Notes and Monarch Notes SHOULD NOT BE COUNTED towards the three research sources; however, **you may use Cliffs or Monarch or another type of online study guide** to help you interpret the literature and **MUST document any paraphrases or quotes from these or other types of study guides.**

4. After reading the piece of literature (marking margins and taking notes as you read) and the research material (marking margins and taking notes), **pick a thematic aspect of the work that interests you.** You can do this by freewriting or making a list or brainstorming. Then ask yourself a few questions:

- What does this book mean as a whole? = Theme
- What does this theme say to me or, better yet, to us in our time and place?
- More specifically, what is true in this literary work that is true for most people in most times?
- How can I relate this truth to the readers of my paper so that they will find it interesting?

**Some common themes and subjects** in literature throughout the ages:

- Things are not what they seem.
- Relationships among humans, nature, and divine
- Heroic deeds of war and adventure
- The homecoming
- Initiation rituals of maturity
Range of romance and friendship
Revenge (Revenge is sweet, senseless, or whatever.)
Relationship between individual and state
Virtues of civic duty
Some themes common to Twentieth and Twenty First Century literature are:
Disintegration and/or fragmentation of traditional cultures due to imperialism, the impact of technology, or other sources.
Alienation of the individual
Relativity of human perspective in judging everything
Political realities of totalitarian politics or authoritarian cultures
Horrors of war and genocide
Class struggle and distribution of wealth
Ethnic assimilation into a mainstream culture
Women’s Rights
Surreal, Magical, and Absurdist Consciousness
Postmodern Issues, such as the impossibility of labeling themes in literature, due to literature’s not representing any reality other than a written one

5. Make a plan (outline). Your handbook (LB Ch. 54) and Lit (Ch. 29) have suggestions for outlining a research paper. Here are my suggestions that I am requesting you follow with only minimum variations:

(Roman numerals designate paragraphs.)

I. Hook - connect with reader through lit work’s theme. Next, you may want to define the critical approach that you are using (most of you will use Formalism). Then use smooth transition (may take a few sentences) to approach your thesis. At the end of the paragraph, clearly state a thesis in one sentence.

Remember that thesis often equals one or more major themes of the literature as agreed upon by critics. Read your research to come up with a theme and check the list of common themes given above.

II. Use good transition to a short biography of author. Include birth and death dates and the most important events in the author’s life, especially the events that may have influenced the writing of the book you read. Use a quote or a paraphrase from the biography; include parenthetical reference after the quote and at end of paragraph to show where the majority of your bio info comes from.

III-IX. Analysis of the work by using the critics’ interpretations to support your views (You may disagree with the critics too, but show an awareness that most of researchers have a little more experience at interpreting lit than you do). Be sure to reconnect with thesis.
frequently for UNITY and to use proper documentation (parenthetical reference) when using quotes and/or paraphrase from the literary work or the research. The majority of quotes (from book and three from research) should be in this section of the paper. **Make sure that the quotes are relevant to the point (your thesis or an aspect of it) you are making.**

Most commonly, the body of the paper may be organized using formalist criticism and spending a paragraph on each of several of the major elements of fiction, such as **Plot, Setting, Characters, Conflicts/Resolution, Symbolism, and Theme.** These elements are usually the most essential to cover, but it depends on the book. **Quotes from the research articles may be worked into each paragraph, but try to keep quotes to a reasonable length and do not use more than two block quotes (four lines or more) for the entire paper.** See the sample research papers that I distribute prior to your due date for group edit.

*An option to interweaving the research with your interpretation is to write a survey (summary) of the literary criticism on this book either before or after your interpretation. A survey of criticism merely states that so and so said such and such about the book. A survey of criticism is a listing (using good transitions) in paragraph form of what the best critics have written about the book. The way to recognize the best critics is to read a sufficient amount of criticism to discern some consensus among them and to choose the criticism that seems most accurate to you. Proper parenthetical documentation should be included.*

**If you are not using Formalism as an interpretive method, be sure to define the method you are using.** This is most readily accomplished by providing a thorough definition of the Critical Approach in your introductory paragraph and then carefully applying the approach to the work of literature. The pamphlet of Critical Approaches discusses various types of literary criticism, and there are books in our library and online sources that cover most of these types, but most of them, especially the postmodern types, are quite philosophical and require considerable outside reading to use them capably.

X. **Options for Conclusion: Restate thesis and briefly summarize, reconnect with hook and/or give a personal impression of the work if you haven’t already done so, and/or provide some new insight that is related to your interpretation of the book.**

6. **Write a rough draft.** Follow your plan (outline). Be aware that if your thesis and/or ideas change as you progress with draft, it’s perfectly normal, even a positive sign. Remember that this is primarily your interpretation, aided by literary criticism. Double space the lines on your rough draft.

7. **Revise and proofread** your rough draft. If you haven’t already done so, **insert parenthetical references** and construct your Works Cited page. (If you’re pressed for time, postpone the Works Cited until the third day of Group Edit.) **Underline thesis, make five copies, and bring the copies to class on the date of the group edit.** The Writing Center is available to help you, but try to get in there early enough before group edit to make any necessary changes on your paper. It’s also o.k. to go to the Wrt. Ctr. at anytime during the week of group edit but not during class time. **Smarthinking** is another source of help on the RP. Be sure to **print smart’s reply.**

8. **Revise your rough draft using my feedback and your group’s suggestions as you see fit.** If time permits, meet again with your group to have them give you feedback on your revisions;
You may also go to the Writing Center, smarthinking, or see me for an opinion on revisions. Type your final draft, including a title page and Works Cited.

9. **Proofread your entire paper carefully.** You may use a pencil to correct minor typographical errors, and this will not affect your grade. However, **obvious errors that you do not bother to correct in pencil will affect your grade adversely.** Also, be very sure that the **MLA format used for parenthetical reference and works cited is correct,** or you may lose up to several letter grades because one of the major goals of this class is to learn to prepare and to document a research paper properly.

10. Put in the **right pocket** of RP folder the Memo, outline, final draft with Works Cited, Group Edit Forms, Working Rough Draft; and First Outline; in the **left pocket** include the photocopies of and/or notes on research articles and any other materials relating to your preparation of the RP.

11. If you followed the above steps closely, congratulate yourself on a job well done.

---

ENC 1102: Possible Stories from Lit for RP: Use index or table of contents to find page numbers of stories. Read brief description of story in t of c and consult Library Electronic Databases>Literature Resources from Gale to determine whether two critical articles and one bio are available. Read the Overview article of story to find out if you are interested; however, Overview does not count as critical article. *=Longer readings=more work=possibility of higher grade somewhat more likely. NOTE: All Final Drafts of RP must go through Ephorus or Blackboard Source Check or final grade is invalid.

ALN      Title of Story

Updike  “A & P”
Welty  “A Worn Path”
Baldwin  “Sonny’s Blues”
Porter  “The Jilting of GW”
Mansfield  “Miss Brill”
Chopin  “The Storm”
Tan  “A Pair of Tickets”
Faulkner  “Barn Burning”
Crane  “Open Boat”
Cheever  “The Swimmer”
*Tolstoy  “The Death of Ivan Ilyich”
*Kafka  “The Metamorphosis”
Poe  “The Fall of the House of Usher” (critical article in text)
O’Connor  “Revelation” (critical article in text)
Gilman  “The Yellow Wallpaper” (critical article…)  
Walker  “Everyday Use” (crit. Art.)
Alexie  “This Is …”
Ellison  “Battle Royal”
Hurston  “Sweat”
Lahiri  “Interpreter of Maladies”
Mahfouz  “The Lawsuit”
O’Brien  “The Things…”

*Sophocles  *Oedipus the King
*Shakespeare  *Othello
*Wilson  *Fences

POETRY: See Casebooks on Dickinson, Hughes, Eliot. If you choose to do RP on poetry, you must explore at least three poems of one poet, or you must pick one theme that comes out in at least three poems (may be from different poets). Eliot’s “JAP” is long enough to use single poem for RP. Other choices from Lit not listed above: Run the title by me, tell me why, and I almost always approve.

Grp. Editing Process: 1. Writer slowly reads essay aloud to group. Group follows on copies of the essay. When finished reading, the writer takes a ten minute break (check the clock) to allow the group time to reread the paper and to make notes in the margins on their copies of the essay.

2. As the group rereads the paper silently, each editor should look for and comment on the major items in the 10 criteria for effective writing. Major items are Intro-hook technique, thesis, unity, organization, fluidity, specific development, conclusion, language, and mechanics.

**Note change below in Group Editing process from E#1: To speed up the editing process, Writer is present when her/his paper is discussed and may join in the discussion. Remember that everyone needs to be nice. Writer may take a short break while group silently rereads paper.

3. The recorder will fill in the form, and the writer should not be the recorder but may also take notes as she or he listens to the group. During the filling out of the editing form, there should be discussion about the paper with the writer. The writer may be an active participant in this discussion.

4. After the editing form is completed, all copies and the group editing form go back to the writer, and she or he then uses the suggestions for revising the rough draft. Remember that the writer has final say-so and total responsibility for any changes.

Please circle, underline, or write a comment for each item below.
1. Writing Situation & Voice: Purpose, Audience, Tone
   Any problems? ____________________
2. Clarity and Thoughtfulness: Is essay written so that reader who has not read the book may get a clear understanding of the book and its message by reading the essay? __________ Any Suggestions: ____________________________ Are there any elements of fiction (setting, plot, character, conflicts, symbol, theme) that need more explanation for someone who has not read the book? ____________ Does the essay show that the writer is well informed and thoughtful? ____________

3. Thesis: Thesis should state a theme, which is a universal truth that may be applied to most people in most eras. Check that thesis goes beyond what happens (plot) in the book and interprets overall meaning. Does thesis state a theme? __________ If necessary, see sample themes on handout for RP. What is the assertion made in the thesis? List key words in thesis that may be repeated in body of essay? ________________ Does the writer return to assertion/thesis for Unity in body of essay? __________ Location of thesis? End of Intro par. or other location? If other, is location suitable? Any suggestions to improve thesis?

4. Intro & Conclusion (LBHCh4d) What technique does Intro Par. use to hook reader? Circle one or more: question, anecdote, quotation, fact or statistic, opinion related to theme of story, background info, visual image, state a problem, define a word, other? ________________ Does Intro Par. state title of book (in quotes) and use good transition from hook to thesis? __________ Mark FL (more fluidity) in margin of any area of Intro that does not flow well. Is Setting (time and place) of story given in Intro or Plot par.? Conclusion: Circle one or more: state or restate thesis, summarize, emphasize importance of thesis, give personal insight, use a quote, recommend action, echo hook, other. Does conclusion address personal appeal of the book about which the essay is written? __________ Personal appeal includes mature reasons why you liked or disliked the work and whether you think your responses are unique and why. Any suggestions: __________________________
5. Unity: all body paragraphs are specifically connected to thesis in Intro Par, or whole essay leads up to thesis if it’s in Concl. Par.)

One way to improve unity: If thesis is located in Intro Par., underline key words or phrases in thesis that may be repeated in body paragraphs to keep thread of thesis running throughout essay.

If thesis is in Concl., suggest TRs (LB 44-5) in body pars. (esp. beginning of par.) that lead up to thesis in concl. If topic shifts abruptly, TRs are best created by the writer (rather than using one from list) and may take a whole sentence.

6. Organization: Check the Outline: Does structure of essay reflect Elements of Fiction Approach using formula:

Setting + Plot + Characters + Conflict/Resolution + = Theme ?

Note: It’s o.k. to reverse order of Setting, Plot, and Characters. It’s o.k. to include paragraphs on symbol, point of view, or other elements. Check whether essay itself follows order of outline.

Suggestions? 

Other possible approaches include using another method of literary criticism, such as Reader-Response (closest to personal reaction), Psychological, Sociological, Marxist, Feminist, Historical. (See Lit: Critical Theory.). If one of these methods is used, the writer should provide a clear definition of the method early in the essay and perhaps briefly explain why this method of interpretation is preferred to Elements of Fiction approach.

Is there a paragraph (I suggest par. two) on biography of author? 

Blend or Survey: Are the critics’ views blended in to the writer’s interpretation of the book, or is there a separate paragraph that surveys (summarizes) the critics’ views?

Suggestions on organization:

7. Fluidity: Within each par., do sentences flow smoothly from one to the next? Mark areas that do not flow well with FL in margin and suggest a fluidity technique: insert transition, join sentences with and or another coordinating conjunction (fanboys), add a subordinator (LB 195) between sentences.

8. Development: What kind of support is given in the body paragraphs? Underline types of support used: 1. quotes from the story (primary source), 2. paraphrase of the story, 3. literary criticism (secondary source).

Are at least three quotes from the story used in the essay? 

Are at least three quotes from the research used in the essay? 

Is each quote followed by appropriate parenthetical reference? This means using the author’s last name and page number in parentheses after the quote.

Is block format used for quotes of four lines or more? Block format indents 10 spaces, uses no quote marks, and places a period before the parentheses.
Does the writer clearly explain how a quote supports his or her point, if the connection is not obvious? Remember the PIE method: make a point, support with an illustration or quote, explain how the quote proves the point. 

**Bio. par.:** Does end of bio par. contain a parenthetical ref for source of majority of paragraph?

**Plot par.:** (Underline one.) divided into expo, rising, turning pt. falling, concl. or begin, mid, end? Under one page (about 300 words max)? 
Plot summary in present tense? 
Connection of plot to theme mentioned? 
Suggestions: 

**Characters par.:** brief description of main characters and each char.’s relation to theme (even if small relation)? 
Suggestions: 

Labels for characters used: (underline) static, dynamic: flat, round or developing; major or main, minor; protagonist, antagonist, foils (contrast to main); hero, villain, antihero (ordinary, less than noble), stereotype. 

Any quotes used in descrip. of characters? Par. Ref.? 
Suggestions: 

Char. Par. connected to thesis? 

**Conflicts/Resolution par.:** Are conflicts classified as physical, social, psychological? 
Are conflicts clearly identified or does reader have to pull them out of the par.? 
Optional: Does the writer mention values or abstract qualities possibly present in the conflicts? Ex. truth vs. lies, infidelity vs. fidelity, evil vs. good? 
Suggestions: 

Are resolutions to conflicts mentioned”? 

Is whole conflict/res. par. connected to thesis? 

**Overall, is support provided in body pars. accurate and presented in a clear, reader-friendly order?** 

Are effective TRs and/or key words used to connect body pars. to thesis? 

**9. Language:** In the margin, mark any sentence that perhaps may be improved with **Clear?** in the margin. 

Circle two examples of good diction (word choice) and write **Good WC** in the margin.
10. Mechanics: If members of the group agree that a sentence is a fragment, comma splice, or fused sentence, mark \textit{frag, cs, fs, agr} where appropriate. Also, check use of comma, semicolon, colon, and quotation marks. Please use the index of \textit{LB} to look up grammar and punctuation issues.

If in doubt about the specific type of error in mechanics, merely mark the margin with \textit{?} to show the writer where there may be a rough spot.

11. Goals of Assignment: elements of fiction approach using terms?\________
   Derive theme of a book?\________
   Unified essay with assertive thesis?\________
   Use relevant quotes (at least six total w/par. ref.) to support thesis?\________
   Works Cited page done properly?\________
   Title page created to precede outline?\________
   Correct header on each page of text (Ch. 58d)\________

Works Cited Tips:

- Double space all entries, with first word of entry on left margin; subsequent lines for same entry should be indented five spaces.
- Alphabetize by author’s last time; if no author given, alphabetize by first word of title, excluding \textit{a, an, the}.
- 3 Main Parts to Work Cited:
  1. Author’s last name, first name.
  2. Title of article or book.
  3. Publication data: If article was online, check to see if there is an original print source and include that before the online source. Online source must include source and date of access (Ex. HCC Brandon Library, date) and URL is not necessary but may be included if writer wishes.

Parenthetical Reference: Chart \textit{LB} Ch 58
Works Cited: \textit{LB} Ch 58 chart, esp. #64 on p.499 and ex. on 500. Also, see sample RPs in packet, all of which include URL that is no longer needed.

Order of Docs for Submission of Final Draft

\textbf{Memo/Self Eval on Top}
\textbf{Outline}
\textbf{Final Draft-Thesis Underlined}
Any WC receipt or smarthinking reply
Any prewriting for RP done in class
\textbf{Group Edit Form}
\textbf{WRD (last one I saw)}
Research up to 5 pages (pages primarily used) but no more
Fold Lengthwise, name and section on back at top