

Essay 2

Creative Non-fiction Interpretation

Assignment: You have read four essays in *Best American Essays* in which an author makes an argument. Pick one of those essays and interpret that argument in a concise form for your reader. Your interpretation should implicitly answer the following questions: what is the author's main point? how does the author make that point in her essay? **Do NOT quote from the essay; write your interpretation entirely in your own words.**

Content:

- Your essay must begin with a fully developed introduction that contains your thesis, a precise statement about what point your chosen author is making.
- Your body paragraphs must discuss details from the essay you are writing about; summarize your author's supporting points, proof, examples, etc. where appropriate.
- Your paragraphs must begin with interesting transitions that move the reader from one point to the next.
- You must write your paragraphs in accordance with the MEAL plan.
- Your essay must be written entirely in your own words; you may not quote from the piece you are writing about or any other source for that matter.
- Your essay must end with a fully developed conclusion that wraps up your argument.

Format:

- Type your name, a title for your paper, the number of words in your paper, and your class number and time on the top-right-hand side of your first page.
- Indent all paragraphs.
- Refer to works correctly as either short stories or essays. Put all short story and essay titles in quote marks. Put titles of longer works (films, novels, books) in italics.
- Type your essay with double spacing and 1" margins; use 12 pt. Times New Roman font and left justify your body paragraphs.
- You must write a **minimum of five fully-developed paragraphs** and a maximum of seven fully-developed paragraphs. A fully-developed paragraph is a minimum of five sentences long.
- Your essay must be written in Standard American English, making use of proper grammar, diction and spelling. Papers with excessive serious errors will not receive a passing grade.
- **You must upload a properly formatted file of your paper to turnitin.com in order to receive a grade.**

Grading Standards:

- The A paper is rare (90-100 points). It is of outstanding quality in all, or almost all, respects. The paper is free of grammatical errors. It presents a clear, organized, and well-supported thesis. The essay is well focused, and all paragraphs clearly work toward furthering the main point. Examples and ideas are well elaborated and rooted in concrete detail without being redundant. The body of the piece is well organized with smooth transitions. The paragraphs build on each other such that thoughts are developed from the beginning of the essay to the end. The prose is clear, mature and engaging; sentences evince by precise word choice, syntax, and grammar. With few exceptions, there is substantial revision from beginning to end.
- The B paper (80-89 points) is a successful representation of the writer's thoughts. This essay shows readers that the writer knows how to construct an argument (including an introduction, topic sentences that reflect the main idea of the paragraph, and a conclusion). Furthermore, the essay is clearly organized with a well-developed thesis. However, this essay could be improved by further emphasis on revision and editing. Some grammar flaws sneak through, but don't seriously undermine reader comprehension. Language and word choice throughout may be bland and uninspired. The essay may be "choppy," needing smoother transitions or better organization. There may be a flaw in an otherwise coherent, persuasive argument. Part of the argument may be undeveloped.
- The C paper (70-79 points) needs substantial revision. It usually exhibits problems in organization, development, and style, but offers sufficient content to make a single, fairly basic point. Serious grammar flaws may stall the flow of reading. Oftentimes, the paper is underworked, having not been put through the series of vigorous revisions that are necessary components of A and B papers. Revision may be needed on one of these major areas: thesis, focus, organization, topic choice, analysis. The thesis may be obvious, unoriginal, or inadequate to the assignment. The argument may be undeveloped. The focus may be so broad that the essay merely skims the surface of the assignment without going into anything in any depth.
- The D paper (60-69) is almost always profoundly lacking in content and/or evidence of standard American English writing skills. The paper contains five or more serious spelling, grammatical, mechanical, or stylistic errors. Furthermore, ideas and organization may be suggested but are seriously underdeveloped. Sometimes the flaws in this paper are so numerous and compacted that single sources of error are difficult to isolate and analyze. Often, this paper is significantly short of required length or word count. This essay has serious and consistent problems. Such problems may include: little or no sense of writing purpose; lack of logical organization (points lack unity or connection to one main point); inconsistent use/failure to use appropriate evidence; and/or failure to maintain a respectable prose style.
- The F paper (59 and below) is oftentimes a work characterized by a lack of care or effort. It is under-done in every sense of the term. Other times, however, this paper may exhibit characteristics of the higher grade paper, even an A-level paper, but is undermined by grammar and mechanical flaws so numerous and serious that no skilled assessor of college-level writing can give it a pass. This essay is unacceptable because: it may not meet the minimum requirements of the assignment; it may show a complete misunderstanding of the material with which it deals; its prose style may fail to meet the basic communication requirements of standard written English.