**RESPONSE PAPER**

**Goal**

You may choose to use one of the writing prompts (see below) or not but definitely don’t just regurgitate what you heard in class or in the textbook. I want to hear your opinion and support it with examples from chosen text.

**Where to submit it?**

* To D2L **or**
* Turnitin.com (ID 22025419, passcode key 2122D)

**What to focus on?**

A literary response paper writing is a response to the specific literary you have just read. It is your own understanding and knowledge that you have gained from the specific reading. While a small part may include a plot summary of the reading, you also need to emphasize the main topics, themes, and ideas presented to you. (Don’t know about literary terms? You can look those up. I have one for [fiction](2122%20Literary%20Elements%20of%20Fiction.docx) and one for [poetry](2122%20Literary%20Elements%20of%20Poetry.pdf). Also feel free to ask me a question like what does theme mean again?) Go beyond what it is about and show what strikes you in a particular way and how does the author present that. Think about:

* how you felt upon reading it
* what you thought about it
* what you liked best about it
* what you liked least about it
* how does this story reflect a sense of a particular British era

**Definition**

A **response paper**, such as the one you'll write for your assignment (min 1 page, max 2 pages), should do for your reader a number of things.

* It should offer an interpretation of the poem's overall meaning; it should analyze the language (see elements of literature for poetry & fiction).
* It should evaluate its effectiveness on you as reader.
* It should make clear what I call the "human" element.  This last element simply means what overall statement the poem is making about humans, or what it means to be human.  One way of showing the human element is to show how the poem's ideas apply your life and experiences. Also, it wouldn’t hurt to reference how the poem is representative of the era (ie Romantic, Victorian, etc).

**Citations**

When you look up information online from a good accredited source, please document it with proper citations! Proper quotes and proper work citations in **MLA**! There are online tools to help you with this!

**The Dos and Don'ts of Response Papers:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| DO NOT: Only summarize plot | DO: Analyze the thematic and symbolic significance of events in the story |
| DO NOT: Say you didn't like a character         | DO: Explain *how* a character was unlikable, how that effects the reading experience, and *why* that may or may not have been the author's intent |
| DO NOT: Generalize and provide vague reasons behind your Text Analysis | DO: Use specific examples from the text(including quotes, if significant). |
| DO NOT: Make superficial, obvious insights (poor thesis: *The Bluest Eye* is about the struggles of growing up.) | DO: Think deeply, and look closely into the work. Notice things that a casual reader would not. |
| DO NOT: Simply repeat ideas mentioned in class by the instructor or by other students.  | DO: Build off ideas mentioned in class, adding your own thoughts and insights to the discussion. |

Here's an overall **checklist of strategies** that will help you write critical papers:

          \*  Please use **examples** from the text to convincingly support the claims you're making?
          \*  Have you managed to avoid simply offering a summary or reading of each separate line?
          \*  Do you refer to specific moments in the poem that clarify your idea/s for the reader, and have you offered line or stanza numbers?
          \*  Do you use the **present tense** when describing or discussing  events in the poem?  In literary criticism--which is what you're writing--the convention is to use the present tense throughout.  The idea is that the poet is communicating thoughts to you in the present--so that's why the convention is to use the present tense.
          \*  Have you correctly spelled all author's names and titles?  Have you remembered to put the name of the poem in double-quotation marks?  When referring to the author, have you written out his/her full name?  **HINT:** When referring later on in the poem, only use the author's *last* name . . .
          \*  Did you remember to put quotation marks at the beginning and end of each quoted part?  Did you include the line number/s in parentheses after the quotation?   Did you include the slant to indicate the beginning of a new line when you write the lines in sentences within your paragraph?       ex:  "I am sick, I must die./ Lord, have mercy on us" (6-7).

**What the $@&% is MEAL?**

**An Acronym for Paragraph Organization:**

Effective paragraphing is a central skill in academic writing. Many writers have been told a paragraph should contain a single idea; many have heard paragraphs have to be a minimum length—three sentences, for instance. In reality, paragraphs come in different shapes and sizes, and some so called “rules” may put writers in a straightjacket that unnecessarily hampers their ability to convey their ideas as needed in a particular piece of writing. Nevertheless, grasping the general form of a paragraph provides a good foundation. Once you have this basic building block at your command, you can vary from it by conscious choice when needed.

One way to envision a body paragraph is as a “complete MEAL,” with the components being the paragraph’s **M**ain idea, **E**vidence, **A**nalysis, and **L**ink back to the larger claim. Think of it as bite-sized parts that need to be connected together.

The *main idea* is the paragraph’s central message. In academic writing, that message is often argumentative: a paragraph makes an assertion that’s part of the writer’s larger claim. Often the main idea appears in the paragraph’s first sentence, where it is sometimes called the “topic sentence.” However, some paragraphs offer their main idea in the second, third, or last sentence; some don’t have a single sentence that encapsulates the main idea. That said, your reader should come away from each paragraph with a clear understanding of its main idea. He or she shouldn’t have to stop and reread the paragraph to figure out what it’s saying.

It’s true that a paragraph should usually focus on a single idea—paragraphs are, after all, the bite­sized chunks into which you break your argument so that your reader will be able to digest it easily. But keep in mind that, to some degree, you can bring unity to a paragraph that seems to contain two or three ideas by showing how those ideas really fit under the same umbrella. The way a paragraph conveys its claim, in other words, dictates whether your reader will see it as a coherent idea or as a hodge­podge of different points.

*Evidence* and *analysis* are a paragraph’s main course; they are what allow you to prove that yourparagraph’s main idea is plausible. Your evidence could be information from newspaper articles you’ve found in the library; it could be data from research or interviews you’ve conducted yourself; it could be a quotation or paraphrase from a work of literature; it could be an image; it could be a chain of logical reasoning you have developed; in some types of papers, it might be an anecdote or personal experience.

Generally, evidence is external to us: it goes beyond mere opinion. In contrast, how you *analyze* evidence depends on your internal reasoning.

Evidence shouldn’t be plopped down in a paragraph and left to “speak for itself.” If you leave your evidence unexplained, your reader may interpret it differently than you intended, and if that happens, your main idea doesn’t get the support it needs. Therefore your paragraph should carefully *analyze* the evidence it provides; it should, in other words, explain exactly how the evidence you’ve cited proves what you think it proves. Often a paragraph’s “E” and “A” are hard to separate: you might provide some evidence, analyze it, and then provide more evidence and analysis. Sometimes individual sentences will contain both evidentiary and analytic elements. But in most academic writing, both evidence and analysis are essential to a paragraph’s well being.

A paragraph’s *link back to the larger claim* (concluding sentence) is often implicit—it can be awkward to wrap up a paragraph with a really heavy­handed link (“This idea is important to my claim because of X, Y, and Z”). Nevertheless your reader should get a good sense of how your paragraph fits into the larger scheme of your paper’s argument. He or she shouldn’t finish reading the paragraph and think, “Why did the writer put this paragraph in this paper? I don’t see how this idea is relevant!” An effective paragraph will clarify its own place in the essay’s (or section’s) larger claim.

**Other Words for "Said"**

| **said** | **concludes** | **defines** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| explains | elucidates | repeats |
| tells us | reports | argues |
| deduces | analyzes | suggests |
| warns | advises | investigates |
| asks | points out | comments |
| agrees | intimated | implies |
| hints | proposes | informs |
| quips | questions | denies |
| reassures us | demands | declares |
| remarks | relates | mentions |
| cautions | reveals | objects |
| insists | chides | pleads |

**A Charming Poem: Response to "His Coy Mistress"
by Stephanie Ridge (Weber University)**

Andrew Marvell’s "To His Coy Mistress" is the charming depiction of a man who has seemingly been working very hard at seducing his mistress. Owing to Marvell’s use of the word "coy," we have a clear picture of the kind of woman his mistress is. She has been encouraging his advances to a certain point, but then when he gets too close, she backs off, and resists those same advances. Evidently, this has been going on for quite some time, as Marvell now feels it necessary to broach the topic in this poem.

He begins in the first stanza by gently explaining that his mistress’s coyness would not be a "crime" if there were "world enough, and time…" (l.2). He compares his love to a "vegetable," which means that it would not stray, but would grow "vaster than empires," and would do so more slowly (ll. 11-12). He claims that he would happily spend a hundred years praising her eyes, and gazing at her forehead. When that is over, he would spend two hundred years on each breast, and spend "thirty thousand to the rest" (l. 16). He then crowns this romantic hyperbole with the statement, "[f]or, lady, you deserve this state, /Nor would I love at a lower rate" (ll. 19-20). These statements serve to support one of the major themes of the poem: flattery with an aim toward seduction. He uses such grandiose statements to help his mistress understand that he truly cares for her enough to spend hundreds of years simply gazing at her. However, this leads to a problem, as there is simply not the time available.

This causes Marvell in the second stanza to remind his mistress that always her hears at his back "[t]ime’s wing’ed chariot hurrying near" (ll. 21-22). This lets her know gently, but in no uncertain terms that time does have a way of marching on. The remainder of the second stanza uses vivid imagery. We are left with no doubt as to what the fate of the lovers will be, as well as the state of his own feelings for her:

                                                       …then worms shall try

                                                      That long preserved virginity,

                                                     And your quaint honor turn to dust,

                                                    And into ashes all my lust (ll. 26-30).

These lines seem a bit morbid, but I also sense the use of horror, on Marvell’s part, to further convince his mistress to succumb to his affections. He is basically telling her that if she continues to resist him, it will be the worms that remove her virginity from her, as opposed to someone who really cares about her, namely him. He also reminds her that the honor that she is clinging to so tightly to will mean nothing when worms know her intimately. Further, his feelings for her will be utterly gone.

The second stanza ends with these lines, my favorite: "The grave’s a fine and private place, / But none I think do there embrace." This ironic statement provides the crowning argument: Marvell has just described a love that would be timeless if such a thing were allowed. With a love such as this how can they let time slip through their fingers, and justify it? This also provides the second, and perhaps more important theme in the poem. The message is that the lovers, and consequently we who read the poem, should use the time we have been given to the best of our advantage. In the case of Marvell and his mistress, they should use the time to clutch at the love that is there in front of them. We, the reader, may be inspired in regards to something in our own life. I am reminded of the poem by Robert Herrick, which provides the admonition, "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may:/Old time is still a-flying…" (ll. 1-2).

The final stanza provides further evidence of this theme. Marvell asks his mistress to join with him, "…while the youthful hue/Sits on {her} skin like morning dew" (ll. 33-34). Further, in an interesting simile, Marvell compares himself and his mistress to "am’rous birds of prey," whose duty it is to "devour" time. Marvell continues with amazing imagery with this statement:

                                                   Let us roll all our strength and all

                                                   Our sweetness up into one ball,

                                                   And tear our pleasures with rough strife

                                                   Through the iron gates of life (ll. 41-44).

I feel like this is the most beautiful image in the entire poem. It evokes a sense of unity between the lovers, as well as furthering the theme of making the most of our time. Marvell wishes his mistress to be with him when he seeks to break out of the confines of life. Marvell ends with the thought: "Thus, though we cannot make our sun/Stand still, yet we will make him run" (ll. 45-46). If his mistress will but allow him to be with her, he will not only love her exquisitely, but also, they will have such a life that the sun will find it difficult to keep up with them. While the poem starts out with the aim of seduction, it ends with a life statement. And to Marvell, if the seduction works, and they have an amazing life together, both would be a bonus.

"To His Coy Mistress" is written almost entirely in iambs, which gives the poem an easy, conversational feel. The natural flow of a conversation follows most closely the measure of an iamb. It seems an obvious choice for Marvell to use this foot, as the poem represents a conversation. The easy flow of the iamb also helps to make the poem seem more real, more believable, because we don’t have to stretch or sound strained while reading it. There is a slight change in the foot pattern in line 33. Marvell begins the line with the word "now" and places a stress on this syllable. This helps signify that there is a transition in the conversation, as well as serving to provide a more forceful conclusion to the poem. Beginning the third stanza with a stressed syllable gives the entire stanza a feel of more power, even as it flows back into the easy rhythm of iambs. Iambs also fit with the tone of the poem, which is one of earnestness, but not anger, or even frustration. Marvell’s tone is one of calm persuasion.

Ultimately, this poem provides a wonderful pattern for living life and I was completely charmed by this little poem. It reminded me of being in high school and writing little love poems to my boyfriend. Even though this poem was written long ago, I think everyone should read it.

**Questions to ponder for possible topics**

**for the Romantic Response**

**Paper#1:**

1. How was the Industrial Revolution reflected in Romantic poems?

“The Chimney Sweeper” by Blake (p137) , “Composed upon Westminister Bridge September 3 1802” (p 355) by Wordsworth, “The world is too much with us” (p 358) by Wordsworth

1. How did the interest in the supernatural and gothic themes reveal itself in Romantic poems?

“Kubla Khan” by Coleridge (p 464), “The Sea View” (p 59) by Charlotte Smith, “On Being Cautioned against Walking on an Headland Overlooking the Sea, Because it was frequented by a Lunatic” (p 58) by Charlotte Smith, “Written in the Church-Yard at Middleton in Sussex” (p 57) by Charlotte Smith, “Immolation of a Hindoo Widow” (p 949) by Letitia Elizabeth Landon, Thomas Hardy “[During Wind and Rain](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/52314/during-wind-and-rain)”, “[We are Seven](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/52298/we-are-seven)” by William Wordsworth, “Christabel” by Coleridge (p 467, longer, more challenging piece), “The Eve of St Agnes” (p 961, longer, more challenging piece)

1. How was the war reflected in Romantic poetry?

“Eighteen Hundred and Eleven” (p 754) by Anna Barbauld, “The Solitary Reaper” (p 352) by Wordsworth, “Casabianca” (p 905) by Felicia Hemans

1. Consider one of the women poets of the Romantic era who are often overlooked even though some were very popular during their lifetime. (Here is a good blog/resource: <https://sarahrosemcgrath.wordpress.com/2018/04/18/women-of-the-month-felicia-hemans-and-letitia-elizabeth-landon/>)

Mary Robinson “London’s Summer Morning” (blank verse poem) pg 83, “[Female Fashions for 1799](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44987/female-fashions-for-1799)”, “Birth-day”

Felicia Dorothea Hemans (aka Mrs. Hemans) “The Homes of England” (is it sarcastic or serious?) pg 902-908,

Letitia Elizabeth Landon (aka L.E.L.) “Sappho’s Song” or “Lines” pg 1045-1047

Anna Letitia Barbauld “*From* Eighteen Hundred and Eleven, a Poem” pg 754-755 and if time, “Rights of Woman” pg 48-49

1. How do we get a picture of London during the Romantic era through a poem?

“London’s Summer Morning” (p 83) by Mary Robinson, “London” (p 141) by Blake, “London 1802” (p 357) by Wordsworth, “Holy Thursday” (p 132) by William Blake

**Questions to ponder for possible topics**

**for the Twentieth Century Modern Response**

**Paper#2:**

For this response, we are going to focus on the writers who bring their unique ethnic background into the modern British culture. Pick one and respond to how you felt upon reading it, what you thought about it, what you liked best about it, what you liked least about it, and how does this story/poem reflect a sense of British modernism? Use at least one literary element in your paper (plot, climax, character, setting, theme, symbolism, etc).

**Choice 1**

Hanif Kureishi “My Son the Fanatic” (story, pg 1202-1209, British-Pakistani)

Movie Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZlUUFJulM8>

**Choice 2**

Carol Ann Duffy “The Christmas True” (long poem, pg 12-13-1216, British-Scottish)

Movie Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qlYm9P0ujBU>

**Choice 3**

Zadie Smith “The Waiter’s Wife” (story, pg 1238-1248, British-Jamaican, Ch 3 & 4 of *The White Teeth*)

Theater Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rX74Kjw7IJw>

**Choice 4**

Kiran Desai “The Sermon in the Guava Tree” (story, pg 1227-1236, India-British-American)

Student Essay: (sorry no trailer!!!) <https://britishliteraturereflectionswordpresscom.wordpress.com/2019/06/12/reflections-on-the-sermon-in-the-guava-tree-by-kiran-desai/>

Student Prezzi: <https://prezi.com/nm45-g3zecqx/kiran-desai/>