

AP English Literature and Composition

King Lear Major Work Review

1. Compose two different theme statements for *King Lear*. Then, cite focused quotations from crucial scenes that illustrate each of your stated themes.

Theme Statement	3 Quotations	Commentary (How does each quotation support your theme?)
	(1)	(1)
	(2)	(2)
	(3)	(3)
	(1)	(1)
	(2)	(2)
	(3)	(3)

2. What is the significance of the full title, *The Tragedy of King Lear*, and the beginning and ending scenes of the play (analyzing the change or lack thereof that takes place in the work)?

Significance of Title	Evidence	Commentary
Significance of Beginning	Evidence	Commentary
Significance of Ending	Evidence	Commentary

3. What is the function of setting in *King Lear*? Consider the multiple aspects of setting (geography, time period, culture, religion, moral standards, politics, social/familial relationships, gender roles, and occupations) in your analysis.

Aspect	Function	Evidence	Commentary

4. What are the central conflicts (external and internal) around which *King Lear* centers? You may add additional internal or external conflicts.

Internal Conflict (Identify character.)	External Conflict	External Conflict
Evidence	Evidence	Evidence
Commentary	Commentary	Commentary

5. Describe the play's genre (tragedy, comedy, satire, etc.). How does its form relate to the work's meaning?

Genre	How does the type of work relate to its meaning?	Evidence	Commentary

6. Identify and explain the six most pivotal events (one must be the climax of the play) that affect the development of plot and character, and explain their impact.

Details of Event	Commentary
1.	

2.	
3.	
4. (<i>Climax</i>)	
5.	
6.	

7. In analyzing the characters and their roles, complete the following tasks:
- (a) Provide at least two precise and vivid adjectives to describe each character to reveal complex or static nature.
 - (b) Identify each of the characters by their function: for example, narrator, protagonist, antagonist, archetype, foil, confidant, or mentor.
 - (c) How do these characters and the roles they play impact the plot and meaning?
 - (d) Support your assertions about the characters with two examples/quotations of their actions or statements and explain this evidence.

King Lear	Gloucester	Edmund
adjectives	adjectives	adjectives
function	function	function
impact	impact	impact
evidence 1	evidence 1	evidence 1
evidence 2	evidence 2	evidence 2
Cordelia	Regan	Goneril
adjectives	adjectives	adjectives
function	function	function
impact	impact	impact
evidence 1	evidence 1	evidence 1
evidence 2	evidence 2	evidence 2
Kent	The Fool	Albany
adjectives	adjectives	adjectives
function	function	function
impact	impact	impact
evidence 1	evidence 1	evidence 1
evidence 2	evidence 2	evidence 2

8. Identify at least 2 symbols and 2 examples of Topsy Turvy World from the text. Explain their significance and connection to the plot and theme.

Symbol #1 with Textual Evidence	How does the symbol relate to the meaning of the novel?	Symbol #1 with Textual Evidence	How does the symbol relate to the meaning of the novel?
Example of Topsy Turvy World #1 with Textual Evidence	How does the allusion relate to the meaning of the novel?	Example of Topsy Turvy World #1 with Textual Evidence	How does the allusion relate to the meaning of the novel?

9. Choose two of the following prompts. For each of the prompts you choose, write a thesis statement and two topic sentences. For each topic sentence, provide two specific details from the novel for evidence (four specific details for each prompt). Remember, a topic sentence is an assertion, related to the thesis, which must be proven with evidence. **AVOID PLOT SUMMARY.**

2014 It has often been said that what we value can be determined by what we sacrifice. Consider how this statement applies to a character from a novel or play. Select a character that has deliberately sacrificed, surrendered, or forfeited something in a way that highlights that character’s values. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how the particular sacrifice illuminates the character’s values and provides a deeper understanding of the meaning of the work as a whole.

2012 “And after all, our surroundings influence our lives and characters as much as fate, destiny or any supernatural agency.” Pauline Hopkins, *Contending Forces* Choose a novel or play in which cultural, physical, or geographical surroundings shape psychological or moral traits in a character. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how surroundings affect this character and illuminate the meaning of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.

2011 In a novel by William Styron, a father tells his son that life “is a search for justice.” Choose a character from a novel or play who responds in some significant way to justice or injustice. Then write a well-developed essay in which you analyze the character’s understanding of justice, the degree to which the character’s search for justice is successful, and the significance of this search for the work as a whole.

2010 Palestinian American literary theorist and cultural critic Edward Said has written that “Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted.” Yet Said has also said that exile can become “a potent, even enriching” experience. Select a novel, play, or epic in which a character experiences such a rift and becomes cut off from “home,” whether that home is the character’s birthplace, family, homeland, or other special place. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the character’s experience with exile is both alienating and enriching, and how this experience illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

2008 In a literary work, a minor character, often known as a foil, possesses traits that emphasize, by contrast or comparison, the distinctive characteristics and qualities of the main character. For example, the ideas or behavior of a minor character might be used to highlight the weaknesses or strengths of the main character. Choose a novel or play in which a minor character serves as a foil for the main character. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the relation between the minor character and the major character illuminates the meaning of the work.

2005 In Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening* (1899), protagonist Edna Pontellier is said to possess “That outward existence which conforms, the inward life that questions.” In a novel or play that you have studied, identify a character who outwardly conforms while questioning inwardly. Then write an essay in which you analyze how this tension between outward conformity and inward questioning contributes to the meaning of the work. Avoid mere plot summary.

2004 Critic Roland Barthes has said, “Literature is the question minus the answer.” Choose a novel, or play, and, considering Barthes’ observation, write an essay in which you analyze a central question the work raises and the extent to which it offers answers. Explain how the author’s treatment of this question affects your understanding of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.

2003 According to critic Northrop Frye, “Tragic heroes are so much the highest points in their human landscape that they seem the inevitable conductors of the power about them, great trees more likely to be struck by lightning than a clump of grass. Conductors may of course be instruments as well as victims of the divisive lightning.” Select a novel or play in which a

tragic figure functions as an instrument of the suffering of others. Then write an essay in which you explain how the suffering brought upon others by that figure contributes to the tragic vision of the work as a whole.

2001 One definition of madness is “mental delusion or the eccentric behavior arising from it.” But Emily Dickinson wrote “Much madness is divinest Sense-To a discerning Eye-” Novelists and playwrights have often seen madness with a “discerning Eye.” Select a novel or play in which a character’s apparent madness or irrational behavior plays an important role. Then write a well-organized essay in which you explain what this delusion or eccentric behavior consists of and how it might be judged reasonable. Explain the significance of the “madness” to the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

Thesis	Topic Sentence 1	Evidence for TS 1	Topic Sentence 2	Evidence for TS 2
		(1) (2)		(1) (2)
		(1) (2)		(1) (2)