

WRITING EXERCISE #3

Due Week 3

Taking Notes and Drafting a Thesis and Plan

PART A – *Due first section (April 15 or 16):* your notes and one page explaining what you have discovered about the story, poem, or song from analyzing its Level 1 details and Level 2 thematic patterns.

1. Carefully read and re-read the text you will interpret for your paper. Using the questions and guidelines given in Writing Exercise 2A or 2B for your selected text, annotate and analyze the key details and elements (Level 1).
2. Using the guidelines and suggestions in the exercises, group and connect related details (Level 2). How are the details and elements related to each other? How are they related to key issues in the text? Note how the details you've observed – including technical or stylistic components – work together to suggest thematic meanings within the text. (“**Analyzing Cultural Texts**” and key points in “Writing about Literature” in Raimés chapter 5b suggest questions and key elements to consider in your close reading.)
3. Based on the related and contrasting groups of details and elements in the text, write a page in which you explain what you have learned about your chosen story, poem, or song. Suggest an overall meaning (Level 3) implied by the thematic grouping of details and elements.

PART B – *Due second section (April 17 or 18):* One to two page typed plan (two pages maximum); include a working thesis, supporting reasons (sub-claims), and evidence. Attach what you submitted for Part A, above.

1. Formulate a tentative thesis statement based on what your annotations and analysis enable you to say about the text's overall meaning. Basic guidelines and examples of thesis writing can be found in Ann Raimés (chapters 1e, 4d-e) and in DOC's handout “**The Writing Process**” (to be posted on the DOC website soon).
2. Your working thesis should include your overall interpretation of how patterns of related details and elements suggest a meaning implicit in the text and the supporting reasons or ideas that support this interpretation. The interpretive thesis should be arguable, clear, plausible to an informed reader, and focused on a particular aspect or two of your text—not on all of its elements.
3. Clarify the main reasons or sub-claims that support your thesis. Which are the most persuasive, reasonable, and/or surprising? List and organize your supporting reasons in a logical sequence that leads to your overall interpretation. Are there key terms that also suggest logical connections? Decide which evidence you'd like to use to support each reason. (See example in “**The Writing Process**” handout.)
4. Based on your notes, complete a rough draft of your thesis statement (interpretation with supporting reasons) and an outline of your supporting reasons and evidence (Raimés chapter 1f). The more detailed the outline, the better.