

Sample Literary Analysis Essay Outline

Paragraph 1 - Introduction

- **1st sentence** - "hook" your reader in with an interesting question, imagery (e.g. "Imagine a world..."), or shocking statement.
- Write a few sentences about your topic.
- Often (but not always), the **thesis** is the last sentence of the introduction.
Sample thesis: "The short story "The Lottery" demonstrates the power of tradition and ritual in society even if that tradition or ritual is unfair or unjust."

Paragraph 2 - 1st Body Paragraph

- **Clear topic sentence** - make sure it relates to your writing task.
Sample topic sentence: "The lottery has been a tradition in this particular society for several years."
- Give **explanation, examples, and quotes** from the story to support your ideas:
"The lottery is a tradition in which one member of the community is randomly picked to be a sacrificial offering to the agricultural gods."
- **Clear concluding sentence** - make sure it relates to your writing task.
Sample concluding sentence: "Although parts of the ritual have been lost or changed, the society in the story still practices the lottery every June. "

Paragraph 3 - 2nd Body Paragraph

- **Clear topic sentence** - make sure it relates to your writing task.
Sample topic sentence: "Some people in this society have positive attitudes toward the lottery. "
- Give **explanation, examples, and quotes** from the story to support your ideas:
"Old Man Warner accepts the lottery without question because he believes in the power of tradition and that a "lottery in June [means] corn be heavy soon" (p. 231).
- **Clear concluding sentence** - make sure it relates to your writing task.
Sample concluding sentence: "Old Man Warner is a symbol of the power of tradition in society. "

Paragraph 4 - 3rd Body Paragraph

- **Clear topic sentence** - make sure it relates to your writing task.
Sample topic sentence: "However, some people have changing, even negative, attitudes toward the lottery."
- Give **explanation, examples, and quotes** from the story to support your ideas:

"For instance, the Adams' family does not accept the lottery because they think it is no longer unnecessary for society to function well."

- **Clear concluding sentence** - make sure it relates to your writing task.
Sample concluding sentence: "The Adams' attitude demonstrates that some people no longer want to practice the lottery, probably because they realize how barbaric the ritual is."

Paragraph 5 - Conclusion

- Generally speaking, the re-worded **thesis** is the first sentence of the introduction.
Sample re-worded thesis: "Today, "The Lottery" is a reminder that people need to stand up for what they believe in and not just follow unfair traditions and rituals that have been passed on for generations."
- Wrap up your ideas about your topic.
- Leave your reader with a **final thought or question:**
- **Sample final question:** "If we as a society had never fought for women to vote, or never spoke out against discrimination, how would we be living today?"

Additional Notes:

1. Make sure your **title** reflects your topic and story.
2. "**Hooks**" and **final thoughts or questions** are examples of **rhetorical devices** (techniques a writer uses to persuade the reader to believe his or her point of view.)
3. Write with **focus** and **passion** for your ideas!
4. Aim to be as **clear** as possible.
5. **Edit** carefully for errors in meaning and conventions.

See next page for a blank essay outline template.

Essay Outline Template

Paragraph 1 - Introduction

- **1st sentence** ("hook):
- **Details to help introduce** your topic:
- **thesis:**

Paragraph 2 - 1st Body Paragraph

- **Clear topic sentence** (directed related to your topic):
- **Explanation, examples, quotes:**
- **Clear concluding sentence** (directed related to your topic):

Paragraph 3 - 2nd Body Paragraph

- **Clear topic sentence** (directed related to your topic):
- **Explanation, examples, quotes:**
- **Clear concluding sentence** (directed related to your topic):

Paragraph 4 - 3rd Body Paragraph

- **Clear topic sentence** (directed related to your topic):
- **Explanation, examples, quotes:**
- **Clear concluding sentence** (directed related to your topic):

Paragraph 5 - Conclusion

- **Re-worded thesis:**
- **Details to help conclude** your topic:
- **Final thought or question:**