

1984 Passage Analysis Assignments (2)

During this unit, we will be discussing each of the three volumes of 1984 on three seminar days. For one of these seminar days you will be responsible to complete the “Discussion Ideas” assignment. For the other two days, you will complete an informal passage analysis essay.

Specs

- 1-2 single-spaced pages in length
- Typed, printed out, and brought to class for the seminar discussion
- To be turned in at the end of the seminar discussion
- You will complete two of these

Purpose

The short-term goal of this paper is to spark relevant conversation in class. Discussion is an intrinsic part of the writing process. Your main goal in your paper is to say something relevant that others might not have fully considered or realized. One of the only ways to know what others don't know is to talk to them. So, if we come every day with a short paper done, then there are about eighteen specific passages and eighteen specific ideas that we can potentially discuss.

In order for this to work you need specific quotes with page numbers (so that we can all look at them together in our books), a good sense of the summary of the book so that you can situate the quote in the novel's narrative, and some general ideas about why the quote matters.

Your passage analysis should contain:

I. The passage

First choose one passage that you find key to a specific meaning or message of the overall novel, or choose several short passages that are significant for understanding a key symbol, image, character, or theme from the novel. It may be a passage that seems to raise a question, or seems intentionally ambiguous and open to interpretation. A rule of thumb is to try to focus in on just one significant passage (a paragraph, a page, or a single dialogue), or two or three short, key references to the image or character you will discuss. For each sentence of text that you quote, you should be able to discuss it for at least a paragraph of your own writing.

Write out the passage: Before you begin your passage analysis, type out the passage(s) you're choosing. This should be no longer than half a page. Be sure to include the Volume, the chapter, and the page number.

II. The context

After the quote, you should make a simple statement about where the quote comes from in the novel, who said it, what comes after it. You are doing this in order to situate the material. Especially note if you think context is important – and why?

III. Your response

Finally, and this is the hardest part, you need to informally explore why this quote matters. You need to ask questions or make a brief argument (or both). Your discussion should interpret the text, whether your analysis is focusing on an image, a motif, a character, the language, or the meaning. To interpret you need to jump off the track of chronological sequence (plot synopsis) — one thing after another—and consider the meaning of particular events or images, etc.

Your grade

You will hand in this assignment at the end of class on the days we discuss each volume of *1984*. You can expect to receive full credit (45 points) for the assignment if you:

- a. Complete all three sections of the assignment completely and thoughtfully
- b. Participate in class discussion during the seminar in some meaningful way