

11-12.RL.KID.3-Analyze how an author's choices regarding the development and interaction of characters, events, and ideas over the course of a text impact meaning

11-12.W.RBPK.9 Support and defend interpretations, analyses, reflections, or research with evidence found in literature.

### Q3 Optional Grade Improvement Assignment **ABSOLUTE DEADLINE: MAY 11th** **Literary Analysis Essay**

TURN IN via TURNITIN.COM BY MIDNIGHT ON MAY 11TH.

#### **OPTION ONE: *The Great Gatsby***

**Choose one of the following prompts to write a well-developed, 5-6 paragraph essay.** Make sure to closely follow the provided rubric in and the writing process that you've been consistently expected to use this year, using evidence from the text to support your claims and develop analysis.

#### WRITING PROMPTS:

- Show how characterization significantly influences a person's interpretation of one character. Your thesis statement would tell us how F. Scott Fitzgerald wants us to view this character. Your evidence and analysis would show the way in which Fitzgerald guides our impression of the character throughout the book.
- Considering Nick's actions in the story and perspective as narrator, analyze his influence on the development of plot and characters in the text and how this exemplifies the theme.
- How do the contrasts between characters help to develop the theme of the text? For example: Tom v. Gatsby, Myrtle v. Daisy, Daisy v. Jordan, Nick v. Tom, Nick v. Gatsby, etc. What do the characters represent about society, and how does the comparison work as a narrative about society in the 1920s and today?
- Using examples from the text, how does Fitzgerald establish his stance on the American Dream as revealed through the major symbols, settings, and recurring natural elements (analyze at least three from the boxes below):

Settings	Symbols	Natural Elements
Gatsby's house/Tom's House/Nick's House	Green Light	Weather
Valley of Ashes	Eyes of T.J. Eckleburg	Geography
The Ritz	Valley of Ashes	Day/Night settings

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### OPTION TWO:

**Task One:** Read and annotate "I Hear America Singing" by Walt Whitman and "A Quilt of a Country" by Anna Quindlen. Answer the following questions:

- How does an author's style contribute to the persuasiveness of a text?
- How does fluency contribute to complete understanding of a text?

**Task Two:** Write a five to six paragraph essay that answers the prompt.

**PROMPT: How do Whitman and Quindlen use elements of literature (syntax, fluency, rhetoric, figurative language, etc.) to define the American Dream? Is the American Dream attainable? Use evidence from both texts to support analysis with correct MLA in-text citation.**

"I Hear America Singing" by Walt Whitman (1900)

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,  
Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe and  
strong,  
The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,  
The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off  
work,  
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deckhand  
singing on the steamboat deck,  
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as  
he stands,  
The woodcutter's song, the plowboy's on his way in the morning, or  
at noon intermission or at sundown,  
The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work, or  
of the girl sewing or washing,  
Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,  
The day what belongs to the day—at night the party of young  
fellows, robust, friendly,  
Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

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"A Quilt of a Country" By Anna Quindlen

America is an improbable idea, a mongrel nation built of ever-changing disparate parts, it is held together by a notion, the notion that all men are created equal, though everyone knows that most men consider themselves better than someone. "Of all the nations in the world, the United States was built in nobody's image," the historian Daniel Boorstin wrote. That's because it was built of bits and pieces that seem discordant, like the crazy quilts that have been one of its great folk-art forms, velvet and calico and checks and brocades. Out of many, one. That is the ideal.

The reality is often quite different, a great national striving consisting frequently of failure. Many of the oft-told stories of the most pluralistic nation on earth are stories not of tolerance, but of bigotry. Slavery and sweatshops, the burning of crosses and the ostracism of the other. Children learn in social-studies class and in the news of the lynching of blacks, the denial of rights to

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women, the murder of gay men. It is difficult to know how to convince them that this amounts to "crown thy good with brotherhood," that amid all the failures is something spectacularly successful. Perhaps they understand it at this moment [in the aftermath of 9/11], when enormous tragedy, as it so often does, demands a time of reflection on enormous blessings.

This is a nation founded on a conundrum, what Mario Cuomo has characterized as "community added to individualism." These two are our defining ideals; they are also in constant conflict. Historians today bemoan the ascendancy of a kind of prideful apartheid in America, saying that the clinging to ethnicity, in background and custom, has undermined the concept of unity. These historians must have forgotten the past, or have gilded it. The New York of my children is no more Balkanized, probably less so, than the Philadelphia of my father, in which Jewish boys would walk several blocks out of their way to avoid the Irish divide of Chester Avenue. (I was the product of a mixed marriage, across barely bridgeable lines: an Italian girl, an Irish boy. How quaint it seems now, how incendiary then.) The Brooklyn of Francie Nolan's famous tree, the Newark of which Portnoy complained, even the uninflected WASP suburbs of Cheever's characters: they are ghettos, pure and simple. Do the Cambodians and the Mexicans in California coexist less easily today than did the Irish and Italians of Massachusetts a century ago? You know the answer. What is the point of this splintered whole?

What is the point of a nation in which Arab cabbies chauffeur Jewish passengers through the streets of New York--and in which Jewish cabbies chauffeur Arab passengers, too, and yet speak in theory of hatred, one for the other? What is the point of a nation in which one part seems to be always on the verge of fisticuffs with another, blacks and whites, gays and straights, left and right, Pole and Chinese and Puerto Rican and Slovenian? Other countries with such divisions have in fact divided into new nations with new names, but not this one, impossibly interwoven even in its hostilities.

Once these disparate parts were held together by a common enemy, by the fault lines of world wars and the electrified fence of communism. With the end of the cold war there was the creeping concern that without a focus for hatred and distrust, a sense of national identity would evaporate, that the left side of the hyphen--African-American, Mexican-American, Irish-American--would overwhelm the right. And slow-growing domestic traumas like economic unrest and increasing crime seemed more likely to emphasize division than community. Today the citizens of the United States have come together once more because of armed conflict and enemy attack. Terrorism has led to devastation--and unity.

Yet even in 1994, the overwhelming majority of those surveyed by the National Opinion Research Center agreed with this statement: "The U.S. is a unique country that stands for something special in the world." One of the things that it stands for is this vexing notion that a great nation can consist entirely of refugees from other nations, that people of different, even warring religions and cultures can live, if not side by side, then on either side of the country's Chester Avenues. Faced with this diversity there is little point in trying to isolate anything remotely resembling a national character, but there are two strains of behavior that, however tenuously, abet the concept of unity.

There is the Calvinist undercurrent in the American psyche that loves the difficult, the demanding, that sees mastering the impossible, whether it be prairie or subway, as a test of

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character, and so glories in the struggle of this fractured coalescing. And there is a grudging fairness among the citizens of the United States that eventually leads most to admit that, no matter what the English-only advocates try to suggest, the new immigrants are not so different from our own parents or grandparents. Leonel Castillo, former director of the Immigration and Naturalization Service and himself the grandson of Mexican immigrants, once told the writer Studs Terkel proudly, "The old neighborhood Ma-Pa stores are still around. They are not Italian or Jewish or Eastern European any more. Ma and Pa are now Korean, Vietnamese, Iraqi, Jordanian, Latin American. They live in the store. They work seven days a week. Their kids are doing well in school. They're making it. Sound familiar?"

Tolerance is the word used most often when this kind of coexistence succeeds, but tolerance is a vanilla-pudding word, standing for little more than the allowance of letting others live unremarked and unmolested. Pride seems excessive, given the American willingness to endlessly complain about them, them being whoever is new, different, unknown, or currently under suspicion. But patriotism is partly taking pride in this unlikely ability to throw all of us together in a country that across its length and breadth is as different as a dozen countries, and still be able to call it by one name. When photographs of the faces of all those who died in the World Trade Center destruction are assembled in one place, it will be possible to trace in the skin color, the shape of the eyes and the noses, the texture of the hair, a map of the world. These are the representatives of a mongrel nation that somehow, at times like this, has one spirit. Like many improbable ideas, when it actually works, it's a wonder.

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### **To earn a score of 5 points, your essay must meet the following criteria:**

- **Focus & Argument**
  - contains an effective and relevant introduction to the text and topic of the essay, leading efficiently to your thesis
  - presents a specific thesis that completely answers the prompt and demonstrates a clear, insightful understanding and analysis of the text and its themes; furthermore, the thesis is consistently and effectively supported throughout the entire essay
  - contains an effective concluding paragraph which reiterates and synthesizes the major ideas, evidence, and analysis explored throughout the essay into a strong final address of the prompt
- **Development & Organization**
  - includes a minimum of **6 complete paragraphs** (1 introduction, 4 body paragraphs, and 1 conclusion)
  - **all** body paragraphs present an argument that sufficiently uses the structure of **claim-cite-clarify-cite-clarify-connect**
  - presents strong, clear **claims** that directly link to the essay's overall analysis presented in the thesis
  - effectively utilizes well-chosen, relevant, and strong **cited evidence** from the text to thoroughly support claims
  - thoroughly and accurately **clarifies** each piece of evidence, explaining and elaborating on that evidence effectively
  - thoroughly **connects** the evidence and its clarification back to its claim and the essay's overall thesis, which demonstrates a clear, insightful understanding and analysis of the text and its themes
  - utilizes effective organizational strategies to logically sequence claims, cited evidence, clarification, and connections
- **Language & Style**
  - illustrates consistent and sophisticated command of vocabulary appropriate to literary analysis (academic and literary terms)
  - consistently utilizes syntactic variety (varied sentence structure)
  - utilizes suitable and varied transitional words and phrases
  - effectively establishes and maintains a **formal style** and an **objective tone** (**NONE of these:** slang, 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person, personal reflections, opinions that aren't claims you've also supported and developed, etc.)
- **Conventions**
  - MLA format is used correctly (heading, title, page numbers, in-text citations, indentation, spacing, **works cited page**, etc.)

### **NOTE - you will receive NO credit for this assignment if your essay has any of the following cases:**

- your essay has fewer than 5 full paragraphs
- you're missing a thesis, or your thesis does not answer the prompt
- you have a body paragraph that does not include at least one clear claim
- you have a body paragraph that does not include any evidence from the text
- you have textual evidence that does not have any form of an in-text citation

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- you have textual evidence that you have not attempted to clarify or connect
- you present evidence and/or clarification of evidence that's not directly relevant to your thesis
- your essay is missing a works cited page
- your essay includes an [Honor Code Violation](#)

**To earn a score of 4 points, your essay must meet the following criteria:**

- **Focus & Argument**
  - contains a relevant introduction to the text and topic of the essay, leading to your thesis
  - presents a good thesis that answers the prompt and demonstrates a clear understanding and overall good analysis of the text and its themes; furthermore, the thesis is consistently supported throughout the entire essay
  - contains a good concluding paragraph which reiterates (without directly repeating) the major ideas, evidence, and analysis explored throughout the essay into a final address of the prompt
- **Development & Organization**
  - includes a minimum of **5 complete paragraphs** (1 introduction, 3 body paragraphs, and 1 conclusion)
  - all body paragraphs present an argument that **completely and effectively** uses the structure of **claim-cite-clarify-connect**
  - presents strong, clear **claims** that directly link to the essay's overall analysis presented in the thesis
  - effectively utilizes well-chosen, relevant, and strong **cited evidence** from the text to thoroughly support claims
  - thoroughly and accurately **clarifies** each piece of evidence, explaining and elaborating on that evidence effectively
  - thoroughly **connects** the evidence and its clarification back to its claim and the essay's overall thesis, which demonstrates a clear understanding and overall good analysis of the text and its themes
- **Language & Style**
  - mostly illustrates consistent and sophisticated command of vocabulary appropriate to literary analysis (academic and literary terms)
  - utilizes syntactic variety (varying sentence structure)
  - utilizes suitable transitional words and phrases
  - consistently establishes and maintains a **formal style** and an **objective tone** (**VERY FEW USES of these:** slang, 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person, personal reflections, opinions that aren't claims you've also supported and developed, etc.)
- **Conventions**
  - MLA format is mostly correct (heading, title, page numbers, in-text citations, indentation, spacing, **works cited page**, etc.)

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- you have a body paragraph that does not include at least one clear claim
- you have a body paragraph that does not include any evidence from the text
- you have textual evidence that does not have any form of an in-text citation
- you have textual evidence that you have not attempted to clarify or connect
- you present evidence and/or clarification of evidence that's not directly relevant to your thesis
- your essay is missing a works cited page
- your essay includes an [Honor Code Violation](#)

**To earn a score of 3 points, your essay must meet the following criteria:**

- **Focus & Argument**
  - contains a relevant introduction to the topic of the essay and your thesis
  - presents a thesis that answers the prompt and demonstrates a good understanding and reasonable analysis of the text; furthermore, the thesis is consistently supported throughout the essay
  - contains a good concluding paragraph which touches on the major ideas, evidence, and analysis explored throughout the essay and at least attempts a final thought on the topic/text
- **Development & Organization**
  - includes a minimum of **5 complete paragraphs** (1 introduction, 3 body paragraphs, and 1 conclusion)
  - all body paragraphs present an argument that at least somewhat effectively uses the structure of **claim-cite-clarify-connect**
  - presents clear **claims** that directly link to the essay's overall analysis presented in the thesis
  - utilizes relevant and strong **cited evidence** from the text to thoroughly support claims
  - accurately **clarifies** each piece of evidence, explaining and elaborating on that evidence
  - **connects** the evidence and its clarification back to its claim and the essay's overall thesis, which demonstrates a good understanding and reasonable analysis of the text
- **Language & Style**
  - mostly uses vocabulary appropriate to literary analysis (academic and literary terms)
  - utilizes at least some syntactic variety (varied sentence structure)
  - utilizes suitable transitional words and phrases
  - establishes and maintains a **formal style** and an **objective tone** (**FEW USES of these:** slang, 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person, personal reflections, opinions that aren't claims you've also supported and developed, etc.)
- **Conventions**
  - MLA format is followed (heading, title, page numbers, in-text citations, indentation, spacing, **works cited page**, etc.)

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- your essay has fewer than 5 full paragraphs
- you're missing a thesis, or your thesis does not answer the prompt
- you have a body paragraph that does not include at least one clear claim
- you have a body paragraph that does not include any evidence from the text
- you have textual evidence that does not have any form of an in-text citation
- you have textual evidence that you have not attempted to clarify or connect
- you present evidence and/or clarification of evidence that's not directly relevant to your thesis
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