

Sample Body Paragraph (Structure)

Red -- Topic Sentence

Blue -- Context (Summarize the part of the book you're discussing. Who/where/when/where)

Green -- Evidence (Usually a direct quote)

Black -- Analysis

Orange -- Conclusion

1. Analysis of what the text says directly as well as meanings that are implied, hidden, hinted at or left ambiguous in the text

For example, in your body paragraphs, this might look like:

Moises Kaufman portrays Laramie as an economically depressed town that offers little opportunity for its residents. For example, when Sargent Hing, a fourth generation Laramie resident, describes the town, he says, “All the towns in southern Wyoming are laid out and spaces because of the railroad came through” (21). Hing’s explanation establishes that Laramie was founded as a railroad town and associates it with an outdated industry. Kaufman’s choice to include this description on the first page of the play implies that Laramie is no longer a “major stopping point” and suggests that this is a community closely linked with the distant past. **Hing’s description is the first indication of Laramie’s economic status.**

2. Analysis of how literary elements (theme, setting, characterization, symbolism and conflict) are developed in the passage/text and contribute to the overall meaning.

Moises Kaufman uses the setting of Laramie to represent the literal and figurative distance between individuals. For example, when Sargent Hing, a fourth generation Laramie resident, explains Laramie’s history, he focuses on the vast space between towns and people in the state of Wyoming. Likewise, Rebecca Hilliker explains, “There’s so much space between people and towns here, so much time for reflection” (22). Hilliker directly connects the literal distance with emotional distance, establishing early on in the play how the setting represents the distance and difference between people. This setting also creates a meditative mood, one that is strengthened by Hing’s description of the majestic natural beauty of an area where the scenery rather than the people are the focus, a place where people can “see the mountains, smell the air, listen to the birds, just take in what’s around you” (23). Hing also uses the setting to represent an opportunity for solitary reflection.

Within the first pages of the play, Kaufman uses setting to both create the thoughtful mood that infuses the entire play and represent the distance that separates people within the community.

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Suzanne Collins' characterization of Peeta as a hero who is willing to put his own safety at risk helps convey the central theme that risk taking on behalf of others is a moral obligation. Early on in the series, Peeta demonstrates his willingness to put himself at risk to help Katniss. During a cold winter night after Katniss's father dies, Peeta spots her looking for food outside of his family's bakery. Although he will be physically punished by his mother, who hits him hard enough to leave a "red welt that stood out on his cheekbone," he chooses to help Katniss: "...he threw a loaf of bread in my direction. The second quickly followed" (Collins, 90). Collins' introduces Peeta in this scene through a heroic action. This quickly establishes that he is willing to go outside of his comfort zone to help others. The fact that his mother hits him also demonstrates that Peeta is not necessarily the child of parents who promote peace and generosity. His goodness is stronger than heredity. Furthermore, this scene reveals the close relationship between hunger and survival. A simple gesture is the difference between life and death in District 12. Collins' characterization of Peeta's actions and words throughout the series help convey the theme that good people are sometimes willing to put their own safety at risk to help others. More than any other character, Peeta embodies this concept, although it is also conveyed through the characterization of his partner, Katniss.

High School Senior

Example of analysis of how literary elements (theme, setting, characterization, symbolism and conflict) are developed in the passage/text and contribute to the overall meaning.

Throughout the book, Nick also learns about the danger of living a life based on fantasy. After Gatsby dies, Nick imagines how he must have experienced losing Daisy and everything she represented: "He must have looked up at an unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves and shivered as he found what a grotesque thing a rose is and how raw the sunlight was upon the scarcely created grass" (Fitzgerald, 161). Through this setting description, Fitzgerald makes

clear that Gatsby's entire world was built on an unattainable dream and that the dream made him see the world through a distorted lens. This is made clear through the description of familiar, everyday details of the setting, such as the "sky," "leaves," a "rose," and "grass" that are transformed into threatening objects. This technique demonstrates how one's impression of his or her setting is determined by their frame of mind, rather than an objective truth. When Gatsby -- and by extension, Nick -- are disappointed and disillusioned, the world too, appears distorted. Even the classically beautiful rose can represent something strange. The reference to the flower also suggests an association with Daisy, who is named for a flower and who also becomes a symbol of dreams lost, rather than realized. **The imagery in the passage suggests that the imagined world that Gatsby inhabited has rapidly changed, and that it was very fragile to begin with, a message that confirms the theme that a world created by fantasy can be destructive.**

Published Criticism

Red -- Topic Sentence

Blue -- Context

Green -- Evidence

Black -- Analysis

Orange -- Conclusion that supports/connects to claim

Claim: Yet as much as Laramie represents innocence impossible in a metropolis. Laramie also represents mythological or historical violence - the violence of the Western. The story illustrates the sublimated fear of homosexuality inherent in typical Western homo-social relationships and the potential violence associated with such fear. Such a sensational death perpetuates the image of Laramie as the Wild West and Matt as the Western heroic yet tragic figure.

The landscape revealed in the opening lines of *The Laramie Project* is a land defined by space - empty space and wind - a motif that runs throughout in various forms: verbal description, sparse scenery, video clips and Dennis Shepard's account of Matt's last hours alone on the open plain. As in the filmic Western, the land is inextricably related to the people who live there. Theatre professor Rebecca Hilliker remarks how the space allows for contemplation: "There's so much space between people and towns here, so much time for reflection" (6). Ranch woman Eileen Engen emphasizes the economic importance of the land: "If you don't take care of the land, then you ruin it and you lose your living. So you first of all have to take care of your land and do everything you can to improve it" (7). Police Sergeant Hing explains that the placement of the town was dictated by the requirements of the railroad, another image evocative of the classic Western film: "Now, all the towns in southern Wyoming are laid out and spaced because of the railroad [...] Laramie was a major stopping point" (6). **By carefully depicting place, in which the specifics echo the mythic, *The Laramie Project* establishes itself firmly in the genre of the Western.**