



HL Essay Assessment for Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*

The topic ideas below are just meant to inspire your own prompts. Explore a topic of your choice/design in an analytical essay of at least five paragraphs. Complete the outline attached for peer review and instructor approval.

IDENTITY

1. **Explore** what Satrapi is suggesting about the relationship between past and present, and between national and personal history. *What roles do her family history, her environment, and the stories of her relatives play in shaping Marji as a character?*
2. **Analyze and explore** Marji's complicated and shifting relationship with her parents. *What are their values, and how do we see them made evident in the environment they create for their daughter as they navigate life during so much violence?*

CULTURE

1. In an Associated Press interview, Satrapi said, "The only thing I hope is that people will read my book and see that this abstract thing, this Axis of Evil, is made up of individuals with lives and hopes." And in her introduction to *Persepolis*, she explains that she wrote this book to show that Iran is not only a country of "fundamentalism, fanaticism, and terrorism." **Explore** how Satrapi goes about challenging this Western perspective of her reader.. *How does Persepolis dispel or confirm Western world views on Iran? In what ways does reading this book deepen our understanding and knowledge of Iran?*
2. **Evaluate** how Satrapi uses her graphic novel to address the class disparity before and after the Iranian Revolution.

COMMUNICATION

1. "Every situation has an opportunity for laughs." (p. 97) **Evaluate** some of the ways Satrapi adds comic relief in her graphic novel as she depicts how the ordinary citizens of Iran enjoyed life despite the oppressive regime.
2. **Analyze** Satrapi's larger themes/ideas communicated through her graphic novel, and how/why the author communicates them in the way she does.

3. **Explore** what Satrapi communicates about the value of family and relationships through the graphic novel genre.

CREATIVITY

1. **Discuss** some of the stories/storytelling that is done in *Persepolis*. *In what ways is Persepolis both telling a story and commenting on the importance of stories in our lives? What does the book suggest about how stories shape and give meaning to our experience?*
2. **Explore and comment** on how Satrapi organizes and structures her graphic novel, *Persepolis*. *How do the drawings add to and deepen the narrative of the story? How do they work together with text to communicate more than they could alone?*

TRANSFORMATION

1. Marjane Satrapi is telling her own coming-of-age story. **Describe and analyze** how she is transformed throughout this novel: how is this transformation articulated in both words and images, and how do these methods work together?

PERSPECTIVE

1. *Persepolis* is written by Marjane Satrapi, an adult, but told through her childhood perspective. Analyze and explore how this perspective is highlighted and emphasized for the target reader.

REPRESENTATION

1. **Discuss and explore** how Satrapi highlights “rebellion” or acts of rebellion in the novel and **to what effect**. *What kinds of captivity and freedom does the author explore in Persepolis? What stifles or prevents people from being completely free? How do they circumvent and defy the rules imposed on them and attempt to live ordinary lives despite revolution and war?.*
2. **Compare and contrast** the roles of various women in the novel: Marji, her mother, her grandmother, her school teachers, the maid, the neighbors, and the guardians of the revolution.
3. **Explore** how Marjane Satrapi presents various perspectives on what makes someone a hero in her graphic novel *Persepolis*. Who are the heroes of Satrapi’s story, and what makes them heroic? How does Satrapi depict these heroes throughout the novel?

Thesis vs. Topic

As you begin to formulate a thesis for your essay, think about the following distinction between topic and thesis. A topic is a general area of inquiry; for instance, Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* (2003) "shows how a totalitarian state oppresses women" would be a weak thesis but a very good a topic for an essay. From a topic, many specific theses can be extracted and developed. A thesis is more specific and limited; it exists "within" your topic. In your essay, you need to use an argumentative thesis.

In argumentative writing, the writer takes a stance and offers reasons in support of it. Crucial to any piece of argumentative writing is its thesis. The thesis arises from the topic, or subject, on which the writing focuses, and may be defined as follows: ***A thesis is an idea, stated as an assertion, which represents a reasoned response to a question and which will serve as the central idea of a unified composition.***

As you develop your thesis, keep these questions in mind:

1. What is my purpose in writing? What do I want to prove?
(Notice the explicit purpose in the thesis statement: it takes a position on this topic, and then answers the question "So what?")
2. What question(s) does my writing answer?
3. Why do I think this question is important? Will other people think it equally important?
4. What are my specific reasons, my pieces of evidence? Does each piece of evidence support the claim I make in my thesis?
5. Where does my reasoning weaken or even stop? Am I merely offering opinions without reasoned evidence?
6. How can I best persuade my reader?

***Persepolis* HL Essay Assessment Outline**



Developing My Line of Inquiry

1. Question Word:
2. Author:
3. Text:
4. Genre:
5. Literary/Linguistic Aspect
6. Rich Idea
7. Precise Context

Completed Line of Inquiry or Prompt

Developing My Thesis Statement

1. Genre:
2. Author:
3. Literary Element:
4. Rich Ideas:

Completed Thesis Statement

Persepolis HL Essay Assessment Outline

My Refined Prompt/Line of Inquiry:

THESIS STATEMENT:

Paragraph Topic #1:

Textual Evidence	Literary/Stylistic Feature	Reader Effect/Implication

Paragraph Topic #2:

Textual Evidence	Literary/Stylistic Feature	Reader Effect/Implication

Paragraph Topic #3:

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Textual Evidence	Literary/Stylistic Feature	Reader Effect/Implication

Paragraph Topic #4 (Optional):

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Textual Evidence	Literary/Stylistic Feature	Reader Effect/Implication

Your Name: _____

Peer Signature: _____

*Teacher
Approval:* _____