

Writing a Literary Analysis

SHORT STORIES ABOUT SPORTS

TSGW, CH 10

Purposes: Primary

To interpret a short story (fiction--literature), explaining the story's meaning or significance. This meaning or significance (the main point/claim) is expressed in a thesis

- To present a thesis. Readers need to know what you see as the story's main point(s).
- To analyze the story in order to offer support (i.e. reasons) for the thesis. Readers need to understand how you arrive at an interpretation. [A literary analysis is form of argument: claim (thesis) + reasons] (TSGW, pp 404-07)

To help readers think about the story and to help them understand it more fully

Purposes: Secondary

To inform readers about the plot (only when needed) and other details (e.g., historical, biographical) that are relevant to the interpretation. Note: A literary analysis is not a report and should not simply summarize a literary work's plot

To persuade readers to accept your interpretation even though not all readers will

Context, Occasion, Medium, Genre, Audience

4-5 pages; see paper guidelines (Course Notes)

Title, page numbers

Audience—see website (Course Notes). Where might a literary analysis about a sports story be published?

Not time sensitive; role of and interest in sports in our society/culture. Sport as a microcosm of life. (Also, other issues, e.g. adolescence, family (siblings/fathers and sons), coming of age, social class, value of sports, relationship between the past and present, gender, homosexuality)

Genre: Literary Analysis (Conventions?)

Medium: Paragraphing for a print magazine or academic essay

Writing Considerations

How do you construct a thesis statement for a literary analysis?
Where does the thesis go in the essay?

How should you organize a literary analysis? How much of your essay should focus on plot? Analysis and examples?

How should you organize your evidence—reasons/analysis, examples, quotations? Cite quotations (parenthetical references)
Note: No works cited page is required for this essay

When should you use direct quotations from the story? How many? How do you integrate quotations into your essay? See RW: 293-96; 387-95. What viewpoint should you use? First person? Third person? What tense should you use to write about your story? See RW: 220.