

Writing Workshop #1 – Literary Analysis

Kate Chopin’s “The Story of an Hour”

– Introductions & Conclusions –

Introductions:

Introductions can take a myriad of forms; however, you should choose an introduction type that best suits your paper and is relevant to the rest of your essay.

Topics that can be considered for an essay to this type –

Short Story, American Short Story, 19th Century Short Story, 19th Century American Short Story, Theme Female Authors, American Authors, American Fem. Authors, American S.S. Writer, Theme Author, Mini Bio

Begin with either a generalized statement or a “hook” – a line to catch the reader’s attention – Your thesis will be the last sentence of your intro:

Sample # 1 – American Short Story

Read a great short story, and chances are it was piece of American Literature. Some of America’s greatest and most highly regarded literature comes in the form of the short story. From Edgar Allen Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne to Stephen King and Ray Bradbury, these are the timeless works to which readers all over the world owe their passion for literature. One of America’s great female short story authors was Kate Chopin, who wrote her stories towards the end of the 19th century. Some of her more popular pieces include “Ripe Figs”, “The Storm”, and “The Story of an Hour”. Of these, “The Story of an Hour” is arguably her most commonly read. This very short story, as its title implies, expresses clearly the theme of a woman’s desire for personal freedom, which is established through the author’s use of dramatic irony, situational irony, and symbolism.

Sample # 2 – Mini Bio

Kate Chopin, who was born Katherine O’Flaherty, is best known for her depictions of the deep south, even though she was born in the mid-west. Having grown up in St. Louis Missouri, a young Katherine met and married her beau, Oscar Chopin. When Mr. Chopin lost his job, he was forced to relocate his family to a piece of land passed down to him in southern Louisiana. When Oscar died unexpectedly, a widowed Chopin turned to writing to support her family. Finding a knack for this, she went on to produce some of the most controversial women’s literature of that century. Of all of her accomplishments, her short piece, “The Story of an Hour”, is easily her most popular. It is an ironic tale of karma which is related through Mrs. Chopin’s use of dramatic irony, situational irony, and symbolism.

Sample # 3 – Theme

The end of the 19th century was a fascinating time for most of the people who lived through that era. These folks witnessed the end of the Civil War, the steam powered locomotive connecting the far-flung corners of a growing nation, and birth of the industrial revolution. These times, for women, however, were not quite so jolly. Women were treated as second class citizens with limited rights and a profound lack of respect. It was this sort of treatment which eventually fed the feminist movement. One American author who was ahead of her time on this topic was Kate Chopin, whose short stories and her highly controversial novel, The Awakening, kept as a central theme, women’s equality. This theme is evident in one of her most popular short stories, “The Story of an Hour”, as the result of how the author employed dramatic irony, situation irony, and symbolism.

Never begin with “In my essay, I’m going to talk about...” or rhetorical questions: “Have you ever...?” – This is bad writing!

Conclusions:

Conclusions are not as easily formulaic; however, there are certain things which should be present in your conclusions.

1. Your conclusion should tie back into the theme of your introduction
2. Should restate your thesis (this can be in slightly different words and be in multiple sentences)
3. Tie the overall theme of your conclusion back to the introduction (i.e. if you chose a mini-bio for the intro, tie back into that in your conclusion)
4. Close with a statement that will leave the reader with a sense of finality
5. Best never to begin a conclusion with “In conclusion...”
6. Never introduce new material in your conclusion