**Writing Your Literary Analysis**

Step one: Read the work for its literal meaning. Make sure you understand the plot of the play or novel and who the characters are.

Step two: Annotate the play or novel--underline descriptions that seem significant to you. Write down your reactions, questions, and comments.

Step three: Draw a picture of the story or draw a character map that notes how you feel about each main character in the beginning of the work and how you feel about the main characters at the end of the work.

Step four: Review your notes about what you read.

Step five: Decide what question you want to answer about the works you are analyzing. Your thesis is the answer to your question. Try to develop an interesting thesis and interpretation. Choose the quotes and evidence in the story that support your thesis.

# **Suggested Structure of Your Literary Analysis Essay**

I. Introduction

A. Summarize what each work is about in one sentence. Don't forget to mention the title of the each work you are analyzing and who the author is.

B. State the main point or thesis of your essay. Your thesis should answer a question about how an important element in the piece of literature works. For instance, you might answer the question: What do you think was the main point the author was trying to make about his/her subject (theme) or what was the author trying to show through one of the characters?

II. Body

A. Explain your first point connected to your thesis and support it with quotations from the book.

B. Explain your second point connected to your thesis and support it with quotations from the book.

C. Explain your most important idea connected to your thesis. Discuss your interpretation and support it with quotations from the book.

*(Note: Be careful that you don't just re-tell the story without giving your interpretations. A better analysis would focus on your interpretation, not on synopsizing the story.)*

III. Conclusion: You can summarize your main points, and connect them to your thesis. You can connect your interpretation to a larger theme in the novel or you can explain what you learned about human nature or the complexity of human experience through the novel.