

## General Writing Prompts to Begin a Literature-Focused Essay

Excerpts from:

LearningExpress Skill Builder in Focus Writing Team. *501 Writing Prompts*.

LearningExpress, 2003, pages 131-145, [education.depaul.edu/student-resources/academic-success-center/Documents/501writingprompts.pdf](http://education.depaul.edu/student-resources/academic-success-center/Documents/501writingprompts.pdf).

- Tone is the mood or feeling the author intends the reader to experience. Using a specific piece of literature, explain how tone enhances the work. (131)
- Often in literature, there is a heroic figure, or archetype. Discuss the characteristics of an archetype, using specific examples from a piece of literature. (132)
- Using a specific literary work, explain how a novel might influence change in society. (132)
- The theme of a literary piece is the central idea or message that it delivers. Cite a specific literary work and discuss the theme. (132)
- A struggle between two or more opposing forces in a work is called conflict. Cite a piece of literature and explain the conflict embodied in the work. (133)
- Personification is the technique wherein a non-human character is given human thoughts, feelings, and dialogue. Illustrate how this technique is used in your favorite novel or short story. (133)
- The setting of a novel is where the action takes place. Explain how the setting complements the story in a novel you have read. (133)
- Third person point of view is when the narrator has no part in the action. He or she is simply telling the story using the words he, she, or they. A story would be very different if it were told from the first person (using the pronoun I) point of view. Using a novel written in the third person, discuss how it would be a very different story if it were told in the first person. (133)
- Using a work of literature you have read, describe the hero or heroine and his or her characteristics. (134)
- Foreshadowing is when the author gives hints to the reader about what is going to take place later in the work. Using a piece of literature that you are familiar with,

explain how the author uses foreshadowing and how the use of foreshadowing added to the plot. (135)

- Discuss a character in literature that you loathed. Explain the techniques the author used that caused you to feel this way. (135)
- Conflict, in a work of literature, is the struggle between opposing characters or opposing forces. One type of conflict is character vs. character. Explain this type of conflict using a piece of literature that you have read. (135)
- Another type of conflict is called character vs. nature. Using a piece of literature that you are familiar with, explain how the author uses this type of conflict. (135)
- A third type of conflict is called character vs. him/herself. This is also referred to as internal conflict, because the character must face self-inflicted fears and problems. Write about this type of conflict, using a piece of literature that you have read. (135)
- Discuss a character from literature that seems to be present only for comic relief. Explain how this character adds to or detracts from the work. (136)
- Imagery is the use of descriptive details that appeal to the reader's senses. Using a literary piece that you are familiar with, discuss how the author's use of imagery enhanced your reading experience. (138)