

4-Cs

As I read your first round of essays, I found four (4) areas for improvement that kept surfacing & were in need of a friendly reminder. So, here's what I came up with, and I hope it helps guide your thinking & writing going forward....

CLARITY

Your thesis/themes/claims must be clearly laid out in your intro and revisited throughout your essay. If you introduce terms that need defining, define them!

CONTEXT

Do not summarize a story's plot! However, after you've introduced a topic in a literary analysis, use a BRIEF sentence or two to guide your reader to a particular aspect of the plot or character that is relevant to what you're going to address (related to your thesis). You need to paint the landscape or backdrop upon which you're going to find relevance. Here's a possible example....

“In a broken family and a culture consumed by violence, young Sarah longs for a way to seek justice.” (Notice that I've connected a part of the plot and character with the larger theme/thesis of justice.... All in one sentence! Now I can move on to some text support.)

CONTENT

Use the BEST TEXT SUPPORT! This is the most important choice after your thesis, so make good choices about what evidence you will use to support your thesis and topics. Moreover, you can't get away with only one piece of text evidence. Do you think an attorney in a courtroom or a presidential candidate in a debate would try to get away with only one piece of supporting evidence?

COMMENTARY

After including textual evidence, you must ALWAYS provide commentary tying the evidence back to your thesis/theme/topics. You must explain HOW and/or WHY the evidence supports what you claim it supports. This is where your analysis takes shape or loses steam, where you win over your audience or lose them.

YUCK!

Oh, and I guess I should add one more because this kept coming up....

You must NEVER use “This quote shows...” or “This quote is an example...” or anything like it. We will work on alternative ways to help you fluidly glide into and out of your textual evidence. (And, by the way, “quote” is a verb and “quotation” is a noun. Just sayin'