**Response Papers**

**Mrs. Hirzel 2013**

**Response papers** are simply very short, focused literary analysis papers. They will consist of at **least 250 words of text** (your MLA heading and question should not be factored into the final count). The purpose of these is to get you thinking about the text, and get you focused on writing analytically instead of writing summaries. These will also help fuel our full class discussion on the novel and will be used to help write your final papers.

F**ormat: Make sure your paper has the following:**

* MLA Heading and Header
* MLA Citations for any direct quotes or paraphrases 🡪 Example: (Orwell 24)
* A focused question you are attempting to answer centered at the top in italics
* Word Count at the bottom
* Times New Roman, 12pt font, Double-Spaced
* Formal Tone (third person, author🡪reader relationship, no contractions, no first or second person, etc.)
* Works Cited of novel at the bottom of the Page.

**Grading: Each Response Paper is worth 10 points**

* 5 For MLA (anything incorrect will be an 1 point deduction)
* 5 for the quality of your writing
	+ - **5/5** = a focused analysis with interesting insights
		- **4/5**= a broad analysis with interesting insights
		- **3/5**= more summary of what happened than analysis
		- **2/5** = almost completely summary with few insights
		- **1/5**= summary, but at least you attempted the assignment
		- **0/5**= you did not attempt to do the assignment, or it was off topic

**The Question:**

The question should be focused, yet open-ended. For example, an unfocused question would be “Who is Winston?” This question could either be very broad or too narrow. However, focusing it by saying “In Chapter 1, how does Orwell introduce Winston to the reader?” This not only allows you to focus on just one chapter, but it also allows you to step into how the author writes what he writes**. Therefore, it is best to use a question that starts with WHY or HOW.**

The topic of your response paper is truly up to you. Think of what struck you while you were reading and what was interesting or confusing about what you read. This is a great way to formulate a question that you attempt to answer. Here are some topics that might help you in your papers.

* Author’s intentions
* Character’s motivations
* Symbolism/Motif
* Theme
* Connection to history
* Significance of interesting Paragraph or Quote
* Significance of interesting event
* Connecting portions of text to other parts of novel
* Author’s style/diction (word choice)/syntax (order of words)
* Interpretation of character relationships
* Author’s use of metaphor, simile, or other figurative language
* Your dislike of something in the chapter
* Your appreciation of something in the chapter

Jane Doe

Mrs. Hirzel

English 12

4 January 2013

*How do Thoreau’s almost postmodernist author-interjections function within “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For”?*

 One of the more interesting author techniques that Thoreau utilizes is his seeming use of humor that he interjects in his writing. In his section “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For*”,* Thoreau mentions that “To enjoy these advantages I was ready to carry it on; like Atlas, to take the world on my shoulders—I never heard what compensation he received for that” (Thoreau 65). Thoreau uses the dashes to emphasize that this is not meant to be part of his discussion and this part functions as an aside would in playwriting. It is humorous and can even make the reader laugh out loud. However, simply labeling as humor or conversation would be irresponsible as a reader. This humorous assertion functions as commentary on the main things that he talked about in the *Economy* portion of the text. He is starting almost a subconscious dialogue with the reader to make them think about all the things that are weighted on their shoulders and what their metaphorical “world” is. This also leads the reader to further self reflection about what really is the world to them, what they place on their shoulders, if any of it even matters, what they could do to make it lighter, and what kind of compensation they are receiving in their own lives for their toils. This actually seems like a brilliant technique when looked at how it not only relates to what he did, but also what the readers can get out of something as easily overlooked as humor.

Word Count: 256

Works Cited

Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden.* Edison, New Jersey: Castle Books, 1854. Print.

Jane Doe

Mrs. Hirzel

English 12

4 January 2013

*Why does Fern use the epistolary style and what is the function of the style in the text?*

 In *Ruth Hall,* Fanny Fern uses an interesting epistolary style towards the latter half of the novel. During this portion of the novel, Ruth is receiving letters from various fans and editors because of her new found fame as “Floy.” Specifically, in the letters from John Walter, Fern uses it as a way to introduce the character as well as create a realistic mode of communication for the time period. As a woman who cannot even get enough money to retrieve her child from Ruth’s treacherous in-laws, she has no mode of transportation to be able to see these editors and have face-to-face correspondence (Fern 211-213). This creates a plausible reason to write in this manner. However, it begs the question why she put the entire letter in the novel. A summation would have sufficed. Fern has constantly used various perspectives in her novel in isolated vignettes. This structure of the novel has been consistently changing and relatively effective for the narration of her story. It allows the reader to keep moving with the text. The reader becomes more intimate with the main character and is able to see other perspectives by using this letter format in the narration. It allows the reader to see the relationship between Ruth and Mr. Walter develop into one of brotherly and sisterly love. The reader is able to see the relationship grow just as Ruth does. It is also interesting that the reader does not see Ruth’s letters. The readers get her perspective and are not bogged down with her response. The sheer number of letters would slow down the reading. It seems that the author assumes that we understand Ruth’s perspective and only need a few paragraphs of third-person text to be able to understand where she is coming from.

Word Count: 296

Work Cited

Fern, Fanny. *Ruth Hall: A Domestic Tale of the Present Time.* New York: Mason Brothers, 1855. Print.