**Understanding Identity: Literary Synthesis Essay**

In this unit, we’ve scraped the surface of understanding the forces that shape identity. This is a complex topic and we have in no way touched on everything. But you have to start somewhere…

To wrap up the literary analysis portion of this unit, you will be planning and writing a synthesis essay about **at least two** of the texts we have read. You could write about any of:

* “Theme for English B” (Hughes)
* “When I Grow Up I Want to be a List of Further Possibilities” (Chen)
* “Plight” (Simpson)
* “Invierno” (Diaz)
* “An Ounce of Cure” (Munro)
* “On the Rainy River” (O’Brien)
* “The Things they Carried” (O’Brien)
* “How the worst moments in our lives make us who we are” (Solomon, TED talk)
* Between the World and Me (Coates)
* Muslim Girl (Al-Khatahbeh)

You can NOT write only about the same two stories you’ve already done a paragraph about. Make sure you bring in new ones.

Your question:

What kinds of life experiences are important in shaping people’s identities?

This is a general prompt – the focus of your essay will narrow based on the texts you choose to write about.

**The Writing Process**

1. Start by **brainstorming/pre-writing**. Write down plenty of notes, and use organizers like mind maps and Venn diagrams. Don’t worry about the quality of your ideas; at this point, the goal is to generate lots of them.
2. Then, move on to **outlining**. Look at your notes, and see what common themes or topics are coming up. Cross out anything that you don’t want to pursue and connect anything that looks connected. From here, you may be ready to select the 2-4 subtopics your essay will explore. Eventually you will create a detailed outline using this structure:

**Introduction** (hook, background/context, thesis)

**Body paragraphs** (between 2 and 4), each focused around a subtopic, that includes specific discussion of at least one text. Your body paragraphs must begin with a topic sentence and transition from the previous paragraph, and quotes.

**Conclusion** – That draws together your subtopics and makes generalizations

1. **Drafting:** Once you have a good outline, go ahead and write a draft. You’ll be revising and editing your draft, so don’t expect perfection on your first attempt.
2. **Editing/Revising:** We will be using Google Docs for this assignment. **You will write a draft using Google Docs that will be due on Friday October 11.** Over the weekend I will make comments on your draft, mostly suggestions about how to refine your arguments, places where you need more support, and encouragement about what you’re already doing really well!

Essay drafts that come in via Google Docs later than midnight on Friday October 11 will not be given feedback. Your draft does not have to be 100% complete - I will work with what I have. If you do not submit your essay for feedback, you will not be eligible to revise or resubmit your work.

1. **Final draft** – considering my suggestions, revise your draft by Monday October 21 (you can re-submit the Google doc).

**Assessment**

Your essay will be marked out of 24. I’ll be using the rubric below:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Incomplete (I to C-; 0-12) | Developing (C to C+; 13-17) | Proficient (B; 17-21) | Extending (A; 21-24) |
| **Content and Theme** | No clear argument or main idea  Main idea or argument is inaccurate | Clear, but general, argument or main idea | Thoughtful and clear discussion or analysis | Insightful, engaging discussion or analysis  Offers a distinct or original perspective |
| **Support** | No significant support for the main argument  May be summary | Support is present, but often general or limited to just part of the text  Quotes may be present but are not integrated | Effective support that is mostly specific  Quotes are used and generally well-integrated | Very effective, specific support  Quotes are well-chosen and integrated |
| **Style** | Missing important organizational elements (like transitions or thesis statement) | Most organizational elements are present, but may be fairly simple or repetitive | All organizational elements are present and used appropriately  Writing is clear and easy to follow | All organizational elements are used effectively  Confidence and ease in writing |
| **Mechanics** | Errors in grammar, spelling, and word choice are significant enough to affect meaning | Errors in grammar and word choice are significant, but generally don’t affect meaning | Errors in grammar don’t affect meaning.  Vocabulary and sentence variety are appropriate for the piece | Vocabulary is advanced and appropriate to piece  Sentence structures contribute to an engaging, articulate piece |

**Criteria:**

* Compelling hook/lead
* Deliberate, specific thesis statement that states your main argument
* Well organized body paragraphs with topic sentences that make points and transitions
* Specific textual evidence to support your points; well-integrated quotes
* Synthesis: By examining multiple texts together you can draw new and deeper conclusions about your topic

**Note on Academic Honesty: It is critical that this is your own work. Consequences for plagiarizing range based on the degree of the offence but may include a zero on the assignment. If you are using research sources, including online analysis like SparkNotes, you must cite them.**

**Prewriting/Planning space**

Outline for Synthesis – You need 2-4 body paragraph (add extra paper if you are doing 4)

Essay question: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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| *Introduction*  Hook and/or Context |  |
| *Introduction*  Thesis Statement |  |
| *Body Paragraph A* | Main idea of paragraph:  Specific supporting evidence: |
| ***Body paragraph B***  *(focus of paragraph)* | Main idea of paragraph:  Specific supporting evidence: |
| ***Body paragraph C***  *(focus of paragraph)* | Main idea of paragraph:  Specific supporting evidence: |
| *Conclusion*  Given what you’ve considered, what do you now conclude? |  |