LITERARY WORKS: PATTERNS FOR A THESIS

The thesis evaluates aspects within a literary work. The following examples are representative of many possible evaluations.

1. In (title of work), (author) uses, shows, illustrates (one aspect)

   Example: In “Barn Burning,” William Faulkner shows the characters Sadie and Abner Snopes struggling for their identity.

2. In (title of work), (author) uses (one aspect) to define, strengthen, illustrate the (element of the work).

   Example: In “Youth,” Joseph Conrad uses foreshadowing to strengthen the plot.

3. In (title of work), (author) uses (an important part of work) as a unifying device for (one element), (another element), and (another element). The number of elements can vary from one to four.

   Example: In “Youth,” Joseph Conrad uses the sea as a unifying device for setting, structure and theme.

4. (Author) develops the character of ___ in (title of work) through what he does, what he says, what other people say to him or say about him.

   Example: Eudora Welty develops the character of Phoenix, in “A Worn Path,” through what she does, what she says and what other people say to her.

5. In (title of work), (author) uses (literary device) to accomplish, develop, illustrate, strengthen (element of work).

   Example: In “The Masque of the Red Death,” Poe uses the symbolism of the stranger, the clock and the seventh room to develop the theme of death.

6. (Author) shows, develops, illustrates the theme of ___ in (play, poem, story).

   Example: Flannery O’Connor illustrates the theme of selfishness of the grandmother in “A Good Man is Hard to Find.”

7. (Author) develops his character(s) in (title of work) through his use of language.

   Example: John Updike develops his characters in “A&P” through his use of figurative language.