

AP Literature *King Lear* Ruminative Paper Assignment

“See better, Lear, and let me still remain / The true blank of thine eye.”

—Kent, *King Lear*, William Shakespeare

Your first out-of-class essay assignment for the year is to write a three-five page ruminative paper on Act I or Act II of *King Lear*. This assignment is an opportunity to lift up a passage that you care about and that intrigues you and interests you, and to showcase both your critical and your creative writing skills. Use Google Docs and make sure the paper is in your AP Lit folder in Google Drive.

As we’ve read *King Lear*, we’ve taken time to discuss and analyze some key ideas and themes. This writing assignment will give you a chance think analytically about one of the messages (even an emerging theme) from Act I or Act II, and reflect on its connection to your own life.

1. Choose a single quotation from the book—about 1-3 consecutive lines. You might choose a passage that captured your attention, moved you, or felt connected to an experience or emotion in your own life. You might reflect on a key message or theme, conflict, or character from the play as a starting point, and look for a quote based on that.
2. Begin your ruminative by discussing the context of the quote clearly, but avoid unnecessary plot summary. Instead, simply give the reader enough information so the quote will make sense. What situation has led up to the quote? Who is speaking?
3. Introduce the quote smoothly with a strong transition, so that it is incorporated into your own writing. Make sure you format the quote correctly and cite it properly. Don’t forget a Works Cited page.
4. Analyze the quote. What is its significance in the play up until this point? How does it help us understand a message or theme emerging in the play? What does it suggest about the character’s experience, or the conflicts and characters that drive this story?
5. Next, transition into personal writing. In this section, you will write in the first person about an experience of your own that relates to the quote you’ve chosen. The experience doesn’t have to be exactly the same—these characters have their lives; you’ve had yours—but there *should* be a connection. Your personal experience will reflect something about the quote you’ve chosen, and it will echo an idea that stayed with you from your reading of Act I or II.

Note: In this section, you’ll write in the first person. Work like a storyteller, and think about the techniques storytellers use. In particular, you’ll want to do more than just *tell* us what happened. Use details (concrete imagery, dialogue, character, etc.) to *show* us something about your experience, and reflect on it as well.

Now that you’ve considered how the message or themes suggested by your chosen quote connect to your own life, reconnect to the play in your last paragraph. How does the experience you had help you understand the play? Our understanding of the quote and key message or emerging theme you’re discussing will be deeper now, because you’ve enriched it with a story from your own experience. Use that to conclude your ruminative.