

Types of Literary Criticism and Techniques for Writing a Research Paper about Literature, version 1

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_

In order to reach beyond a simple argument or some small personal insight about a piece of literature, the best writers also know that they are writing in a long tradition of literary criticism that reaches back in time. The Greeks and Romans gave philosophers, performers, and writers many ways to think about and to discuss their work and the work of others. We are still working in what is called the “Western tradition” in most of our writing. With the influence of Europe, surrounding countries, and the rise of American power and tradition and culture, these forms have been transformed into the kinds of writing that is done today by American students.

For a quick list of the types of literary criticism, one can turn to the Internet and sources as varied as Wikipedia, SparkNotes, and other web sources. More in-depth material to be found on scholarly websites and in books.

Quick links:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literary\\_criticism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literary_criticism)

<http://sparkcharts.sparknotes.com/lit/literaryterms/section6.php>

<http://teacherweb.com/KY/BallardHighSchool/LivesayAPELit/Literary-Criticism-Overview.pdf>

Understanding this tradition and these writers and movements will help you excel in your English class, your social studies class, and even in writing about art and music.

Your success in high school and college will be greater if you anchor your writing in some of these sources.

- Look at the authors and works listed, and try to find ones that have parallels with your own writing or way of thinking.
- Discover which particular kind of criticism interests you. You will likely be able to use that viewpoint for many of your papers in high school and college.
- Understand the writing of the writers you admire so that you can use it as a foundation for your own literary criticism.
- Use a quote from some of these authors and works, and cite your source properly in your paper.

List your current interests and your writing influences here. How do you approach a topic?

**Keep a list of materials and sources and organize it for your current paper and for future success!**

- ✓ Use 3 x 5 or 4 x 6 notecards
- ✓ Type up your sources and your notes; print them out; highlight what you need
- ✓ Create a digital archive using Dropbox, Google Drive, SkyDrive, or other cloud storage
- ✓ Use a digital tool to gather materials and to create works cited and works consulted
  - Mendeley (all platforms) <http://www.mendeley.com/>
  - Zotero (all platforms) <http://www.zotero.org/>
  - Qiqqa (all platforms) <http://www.qiqqa.com/>
  - Papers (Mac) <http://www.papersapp.com/mac/>
  - JabRef (all platforms) <http://jabref.sourceforge.net/>
  - BibDesk (Mac only) <http://bibdesk.sourceforge.net/>
  - TextCite (all platforms) <http://textcite.sourceforge.net/>

Remember that **digital repositories are excellent, but ALWAYS BACK UP your material** on another website, send emails to yourself, and finally, you should **PRINT OUT or WRITE DOWN** the details you want most and put them in a safe location.

- Having a non-digital copy might allow you to take it into a class if you ask the instructor. They are much more likely to admire you for having a written copy than a digital one.
- Keeping a paper copy means that you can take more detailed notes.
  - You can write in a question mark, or make small notes alongside text
  - You can draw arrows easily to connect ideas
  - Writing it down will help you remember it, and allow you to quote it from memory on tests or in-class papers.

How do you currently save your information?

What sorts of storage, or what programs or apps do you use to keep your material?

___ Email	___ File folders at home
___ Google Drive	___ File folders and filing cabinet
___ Dropbox	List others below
___ SkyDrive	
___ Home computer	List ones you think you will use in college
___ Tablet	
___ Phone	
___ Binders or notebooks	