

## Description & Instructions

A “close reading” is a detailed, sustained, and thorough interpretation of a text or an excerpt from a text that looks at its content and formal elements (such as the use of alliteration or rhyme). Consequently, it can help a reader develop a “reading,” or understanding, of the text. In a literary analysis paper, close readings serve as evidence to support the author’s argument/claim about the text. Close readings will be essential in each assignment for this course.

In this paper, you will perform a close reading of a single passage from Henry David Thoreau’s essay “Walking.” Your close reading should *explain* and *analyze* your chosen excerpt to show your audience how it fits into and contributes to the work as a whole. To do this, you will need to develop a reading of the work that contextualizes it historically and explains—for example—its themes, messages, purposes, and overall point.

Your introduction should introduce your chosen work, relevant information about it, and your overall reading, or interpretation, of it. You may consult and cite secondary sources to help you do this. Next, include a transition sentence (or more if necessary) to introduce your chosen passage and your *argument* (your thesis). You should quote the passage or stanza in its entirety (remember to follow MLA guidelines for quoting passages or full stanzas). From there, perform your close reading (the body of your paper) before reiterating your argument in your conclusion.

## Requirements & Criteria

**Thesis:** Your thesis—argument—should be clear. Demonstrate your interpretation of the passage or stanza and its relevance to the overall essay or poem. I’ll be evaluating how clearly you introduce your thesis, its complexity, and how effectively and convincingly you support it throughout the paper.

**Passage:** Choose a significant passage from the text, introduce it, and quote it in full, using correct MLA formatting. I’ll be evaluating your choice of passage in terms of its significance to the work and your argument, how effectively you introduce it, and your use of correct MLA formatting.

**Analysis:** Demonstrate the significance of your chosen passage to the work. Lead the reader through your interpretation of why understanding the different aspects of the passage contributes to an understanding of the essay or poem. You should refer to the “strategies for doing a close reading” lecture for the different aspects that you will want to address in your analysis. I will be looking for a clear, sustained, detailed, and sophisticated analysis of the passage that supports your argument.

**Organization:** Remain focused on the analysis and include transitions and topic sentences.

**Remember that each paragraph should have *one* focus and must further your argument.** Try to avoid the five-paragraph essay. I will evaluate your paper’s organization and focus, which directly relates to how effectively you communicate and support your argument.

**Secondary Sources:** You may want to consult secondary sources to provide contextual information about “Walking.” Any sources used should be credible (preferably scholarly and peer-reviewed, not *Wikipedia* or some other ridiculous website) and **cited correctly in the paper and Works Cited page.**

**Grammar, Typos, and Writing:** Use language appropriate for an academic audience (you may use the first person “I” where appropriate to emphasize your points). Focus on using the most precise, clear,

descriptive, and concise language that you can. Your writing should be relatively free of typos, spelling errors, and grammatical problems.

**MLA Formatting, Citations, and Works Cited:** To establish your credibility as an author and help your reader follow your paper, follow MLA guidelines for citations and formatting. See the MLA handbook or Owl @ Purdue website for guidelines.

Length: 500-750 words (3 Pages)