

# Core D Comp & Lit | Literary Analysis Topic to Working Thesis Questions

## Ways to Examine a Topic:

- 1. Take Inventory:** *What do I already know about it? What is my opinion coming into this topic?*
  - a) Overall opinion of Gilgamesh as a character
  - b) Overall opinion of Telemachus as a character
  - c) Overall opinion of the events that occur in Gilgamesh's story
  - d) Overall opinion of the events from Telemachus' story
  - e) Do I know people like either of these men?
    - 1) What has been my experience with people with similar traits? How does it make me feel?
    - 2) Does it make others feel differently?
    - 3) What have I observed from my parents', friends', grandparents', or neighbors' experience with it?
  - f) Have I experienced circumstances anything like theirs?
- 2. Ask Questions:** *What about these stories/characters raises your curiosity?*
  - a) Define: *What specific qualities or characteristics would you ascribe to each character and how do they develop?* (Should have at least 2 traits for each character. Walk through questions for each trait)
    - 1) Etymology - what are the roots inside each of those words? What do they mean?
    - 2) Genus Species - what kind of trait is it? Physical? Social? Emotional? Political? Something else? What are its defining characteristics?
    - 3) Synonym/Antonym - What words are like it? What words are opposite to it?
  - b) Compare: *To what can I compare this trait?*
    - 1) Similarity - to what other thing is it like?
    - 2) Difference - to what other thing is it unlike?
    - 3) Degree - how does it differ from something else? Is more of it better? If it ends, what will be the effect? What if it never was?
  - c) Circumstance: *Under what conditions does this trait exist?*
    - 1) Past Fact/Future Facts - what has happened in the past? Does this make a future occurrence more or less probable?
    - 2) Possible/Impossible - what makes this trait possible/impossible in a person?
  - d) Testimony
    - 1) Law - are there official documents or laws that speak for or against this trait?
    - 2) Examples - do precedents exist to give direction?
    - 3) Authority - what does Scripture say about these qualities?
    - 4) Maxim - what does common wisdom have to say regarding this?
- 3. Relationships:** *Examine the interaction between your trait and the plot that influences it. (Walk through questions for each trait)*
  - a) How does [character trait] connect to the developing plot (y)?
  - b) When does [trait] connect to y?
  - c) Where does [trait] connect to y?
  - d) Why does [trait] connect to y?
  - e) If [trait] ceased to exist, how would y and/or the world be impacted?
  - f) If y ceased to exist, how would [character] be impacted?
- 4. Ask the Yes or No Questions:** *Now that you have examined the topic from every angle, take the heart of your argument and form a yes or no sentence.*
  - a) Can it be answered with a yes or no? If not, opinion is not clear.
  - b) Does the yes or the no answer make more sense?
- 5. Qualify** *Now that your opinion is clear, decide the elements to argue in your thesis. What qualifications make your argument true? In other words, what might be your strongest arguments in favor of your opinion?*
- 6. State your working thesis:** *Use the arguments developed in throughout this process to work out a strong, arguable, persuasive thesis that will form as the foundation for your essay. You should strive to include concrete language that clearly takes a position on your topic.*

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### Topic to Working Thesis

#### I. Inventory

- A. At the beginning, Gilgamesh seems amoral and just out for a good time, however, ....
- B. Telemachus comes across as weak-willed and whiny, but ....
- C. The events in the story seem far-fetched and hard to relate to at first, but...
- D. Telemachus' story reminds me of the sacrifices of war, especially for...
- E. A friend's dad served in Iraq for multiple tours and, like Telemachus, .... I also knew someone like Gilgamesh who....
  - 1. The person I knew like Gilgamesh seemed ....
  - 2. My mom didn't like my "Gilgamesh" friend either. She said ....
  - 3. My friend whose dad served in the Marines felt....
- F. I have experienced....

#### II. Trait #1

##### A. Definition

- 1. Etymology
- 2. Genus
- 3. Synonyms

B. Comparison (continue through all questions in part 2)

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III. Trait #2

IV. Trait #3

V. Trait #4

VI. Relationships

A. Trait #1

1. How

2. When

3. Where

4. Why

5. Impact

6. Impact

B. Trait #2 (Continue for all)

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VII. Yes/No question

VIII. Qualifications

IX. Working Thesis