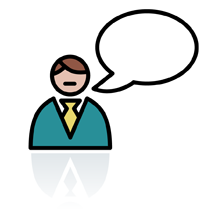
YEAR 13 Research - some explanations and suggestions

1. The most important thing to establish is your thesis i.e. the topic you want to discuss in relation to this novel.

Ummm????

What do I mean by this? Well it would be easy if this were a Shakespearean text. You could discuss whether Othello was a victim or just a jealous jerk. But you would say this in a formal way eg **Othello was a victim only of his own jealous impulses**

This novel we are looking at has some complicated elements.

You need to find something you **want** to discuss:



eg Does it matter which “story” is true?

1. Some other potential theses could be:

(Brainstorm some yourselves then look at the list below – note these are not thesis statements just areas to look at to create your thesis statement)

* You could think about Pi’s role in the story – is a character or a mouthpiece for a discussion .
* You could comment on the writer’s

- choice of structure,

-his writing style,

-the use of symbolism.

* You could discuss the effectiveness of ideas
* You could do some research on magic realism and discuss whether or not this fits into the genre
* You could discuss how the monomyth concept of the hero’s journey by Campbell, does or does not fit this text and if it does why it has value.
* You could consider that this story reveals the psychological structure of the human mind/consciousness.
* You could discuss the ultimate purpose of this novel.
* You could consider the statement “ a story to make you believe in God”

1. Whatever you decide on you **must write out a sentence which states your thesis**.
2. Having drafted some ideas of your own about this thesis, you then turn to the critical material I have placed on the wiki or anything else that you can find of critical value. You find the comments for and against your thesis in these critical writings and use them to develop your discussion on the thesis you have chosen.
3. Your essay should be 600 words developing a critique or interpretation of your thesis where you use your research sources to support or expand your thesis ideas.
4. Here is a sample paragraph or two on Othello to show you the kind of thing expected of you. In this example the research has involved reading other people’s critiques and evaluating them

**Hypothesis: Iago sabotages Othello's relationship with Desdemona because he is jealous of him.**

**After reading and studying William Shakespeare’s classic story of Othello, I have concluded that Iago sabotaged Othello’s relationship with Desdemona because he was jealous of him. While analysing different critics opinions and views on Iago’s motives, I found many contrasting ideas and discovered that not all aligned with my initial hypothesis. Critics’ opinions varied depending on time period. The three main critics and time periods I studied were A.C Bradley (1904), Leslie Y Rabkin & Jeffrey Brown (1997) and Sam Wood (2009). These three critics all showed different views on Iago’s motives and Othello and Desdemona’s relationship in turn. (1)**

**Sam Wood (2009) stated that the relationship between Othello and Desdemona may have been tainted from the very beginning because of the differences in their race and social stature when they married, saying that marriage is a “fiction that can be manipulated” (1). Othello himself states, “Haply, for I am black and have not those soft parts of conversation” (Act III, Scene III) symbolising the perceived lack he felt as a result of his different race. The marriage also was also tainted with dislike from both sides of the families with Desdemona’s father Brabrantio especially stating when first told of the nuptials: “I pray you, hear her speak: /If she confess that she was half the wooer, /Destruction on my head, if my bad blame/ Light on the man!” (Act III, Scene iii)**

**This shows just a small sliver of the sort of abuse and discrimination that Othello and Desdemona faced when choosing to defy the unwritten laws of society at the time and wed. I believe that the strain from racial differences in this marriage could absolutely have affected its heinous undoing and that in the 16thcentury there were a lot more unwritten laws and expectations on what a person should be or who they should love than there are today. This is a very believable and logical explanation from Wood and I strongly agree that this affected how quickly mistrust and rumours impacted on Othello and Desdemona’s marriage. (2)**

Note that the idea in the thesis is discussed. Evidence from the text is used to back up points and the critic’s work is mentioned with clear statements about the validity or acceptance of the critic’s views which again are linked to the text itself

A different approach is to use a particular critical viewpoint (/lens) such as seeing the work as a piece of writing from a feminist point of view or from a psychological theorist’s point of view or to show how society operates from an economist’s point of view = Marxist theory

If you wish to evaluate the novel by looking at it through a “critical lens”, then you need to clarify what that lens is initially.

Here is another part of an exemplar which has taken this angle: This was a low E and got this comment:

* The student has integrated the critical theory of Freudian pyschology, formed own views and built an argument to explain the behaviour of characters from Lord of the Flies.
* Synthesised information from Lord of the Flies and critical texts in an informed and perceptive way.
* Showed consistent moments of insight.
* Showed evidence (not included here but handed in prior) of:
  + developing a hypothesis or theory to frame an investigation
  + selecting critical text(s)
  + selecting information and evaluating its reliability and usefulness in relation to the investigation

**Freudian analysis of The Lord of The Flies**

**As children, do we have a perception of what is right or wrong? Can we think for ourselves or do we simply base our beliefs on those of our parents? And when do we really make the change from a trusting child to a discerning adult? For Sigmund Freud, these questions were central in his thesis. Lord of the Flies is a text which is very closely related to Freud and his theories, and throughout the novel, we are given many insights into this Freudian psychoanalysis.(1)**

**The book begins with a group of kids who are trapped on an island in war time. The interesting thing from a Freudian perspective is that these kids are just that, kids, and they do not have parental guidance on this island. They are left entirely to their own devices, and as a result rely on their previously formed super egos, egos, and id. In the Lord of The Flies, the super ego is interesting because as kids, they have not fully developed this part of their mind. For them, they can only base their super ego on their perception of the rules and laws of the outside world, and they can only imitate what they have seen from their role models**

**and adult figures in their lives but they themselves are not able to appreciate the laws or rules of society. The boys are characterised in a way that fits perfectly into Freudian analysis. There are many characters, but the three key ones are Ralph, Roger, and Piggy, who could also be**

**interpreted as being the Ego, Id, and close to Super Ego. Roger is the boy who is closest to representing the id.First seen throwing stones at the young’uns, at this stage Roger is not completely id-ridden. He still has that sense of society in his thinking, and as a result throws the stones in order that they just miss the young’uns rather than hit them. He is still held by “the taboo of the old life” and is not ‘N completely conscience free. It doesn’t take long, though, for Roger to become completely id-driven, and when he violently murders Piggy, he is acting completely on his natural survival and selfish instincts, with absolutely no**

**consideration of morals or consequence. According to Freud, this is almost an exact description of the Id. It is the most natural, completely instinctive part of the mind that acts on impulse and the pleasure principle. If something is going to bring satisfaction, however temporary, the Id will seek to obtain it.(2)**

**Ralph is the boy who is always practical, knows himself and his own limits, and knows what he wants. In Freudian theory, the ego is the part of the mind which seeks to please the id’s desires, however is also concerned about the long term consequences, and will weigh up the pros and cons before making a decision. The ego and Ralph show countless numbers of similarities, Ralph being a representation of this part of Freud’s theory. We see many examples where these exact traits are shown by Ralph, and one such example is seen when the boys are discussing the beast. Naturally, everyone is frightened by the beast, but Ralph shows his discerning qualities when he says “I’m frightened myself sometimes, only that’s nonsense!” His id and natural instincts tell him that he should be frightened, but his ego and common sense tells him that the beast is “nonsense”. Here, Ralph’s calm, thoughtful nature**

**shows us the development of the other part of his mind, the super ego. Ralph is the one character who throughout the story shows a change of nature for the better. The real turning point for him is when quiet, innocent Simon is murdered, and he is involved. Ralph realizes at this moment that there is a difference between right and wrong, and that we control our own destiny, and our decisions affect others, no just ourselves. When the boys murder Simon, their Id takes over control, and they are caught up in the sheer excitement of it all. At** **this moment, Ralph’s Id overrules his ego. However while reflecting on the previous night, Ralph begins to ask honest, moral questions, “Didn’t you see what we... did?”, whereas the other boys deny they had anything to do with the murder. He realizes that what they did was wrong, and is willing to accept some of the responsibility for it. It is this thought process that**

**shows he is moving on from the ego way of thinking to a more mature, grown up approach, which is far closer to the superego. Right though the novel, Ralph is in fact changing and growing as a person and coming to terms with himself.**

These are just the opening paragraphs