

**IB World Literature Assignment 1**  
**Advice to Students**  
**Writing IB World Literature Essays**

**Start with the Heart!**

This is not a mathematical exercise! (Assignment 1). For Criterion A, it will be difficult to earn more than 2 out of 5 unless you write with passion, since to earn a 3 you must include a “personal response”. What does the story/play/poem do to you? How does it do it? So what? How does the author of this work treat the big questions: Who are we? Where are we? What should we be doing?

**Have a genuine question, and use your essay to explore that question.**

Most student essays are boring to read because the writers are bored when they write them. Why? Because there’s no personal engagement. It’s just an exercise in writing down what’s already in your head about some topic you don’t really care about anyway. Ideally, an essay is an opportunity to think deeply about a question that intrigues you. As a result of that deep thinking, you change. By the time you finish the essay, you’re not quite the same person you were when you started. You understand a bit more. Your perspective is a bit different. You have new questions. If your essay comes out of a genuine question, shows your personal engagement with that question, and shows that by thinking deeply about the question you have learned something, you have changed, you have grown... then your essay will be almost a complete success. The other part, of course, is writing well. But notice that writing well counts for only 25% of your marks (Criterion D).

**Organization for Comparison-Contrast Essays (Assignment 1)**

**Great literature raises questions. It does not give answers!**

Don’t waste your time trying to explain “what it means” or “what the author believes”. Instead, identify the questions being raised. Discuss the ways those questions are handled, and the possible implications.

<p><b>Model A: never!</b> Intro Work #1 Work #2 Conclusion</p>	<p><b>Model B: only for short, in-class essays.</b> Intro Similarities Differences Conclusion</p>	<p><b>Model C: the one to use.</b> Intro Point of Comparison #1 POC #2 POC #3</p>
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**Miscellaneous Notes**

Put your **name, IB number, etc.**, in a header so it appears automatically on every page and you don’t have to add it in later. Use a standard **font**, big enough so it’s easy to read, and double-space your essay (line-spacing = 2). 14-point Times New Roman is a good choice. Be sure that the first sentence of each body states the assertion of that **Topic sentences should not recount events from the story!** Do NOT write topic sentences like this: “The most interesting thing about Gandalf is the mystery that surrounds him.” Revise them to **use strong, active verbs**: “The mystery surrounding Gandalf fascinates us.” Don’t throw around words you don’t truly understand. No examiner will be impressed if you go on and on about “epiphanies” or “catharsis” or

“exposition” when you are simply parroting words introduced by your teacher. **Use plain, simple language**; tell the truth; and show how these works have engaged your imagination.

**Genre:** don’t call a novel a play, or an epic poem a novel. “Heroin” is an illegal drug derived from poppies. “**Heroine**” is the female protagonist of a story.

**DON’T USE FOOTNOTES!** No examiner reading 210 papers will bother to read footnotes. Cite sources in the body of your essay, using a format prescribed by your teacher. Learn from your teacher, too, the proper ways to include **quotations**—long, short, dialogue—in your essay.

### **Openings / Introductions**

[optional for formal essays] Catch the reader’s interest with a relevant anecdote, quotation, question, or startling statement. [Essential] State your thesis: all of your major assertions, plus a brief preview of your conclusion.

### **Closings / Conclusions**

These can be deadly boring, and hardly worth reading. Make yours more interesting by using it to put all the pieces of your argument together, and discuss the implications. Perhaps you can touch on further questions that now arise, given what you have discovered writing your essay. Or sum up your personal response in light of what you’ve discovered. A good technique is the *da capo* ending (“from the top”), in which you return to the beginning (the anecdote, quotation, question, or statement you began with) and then comment further. Some frown on this in a formal essay, but you will not be penalized for it on a World Lit essay.

### **Quoting**

Documenting a source means recording information that allows another person to locate the source you have used for your paper – things such as author, title, date, page number, etc. This information is then inserted into your essay as an in-text reference, note, or bibliography entry, depending on the style you are using (such as APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.). This is also called “citing”.

The Modern Language Association (MLA) Style is widely used for identifying research sources (<http://www.aresearchguide.com/12biblio.html>) In MLA style you briefly credit sources with parenthetical citations in the text of your paper, and give the complete description of each source in your *Works Cited* list. The *Works Cited* list, or *Bibliography*, is a list of all the sources used in your paper, arranged alphabetically by author’s last name, or when there is no author, by the first word of the title (except *A*, *An* or *The*).

For example:

*In the text of your paper:*

The first gambling Web site appeared in 1995, and online gambling has since become the most lucrative Internet business (Will 92).

*or,*

George Will reported that in 2002 Internet gambling surpassed pornography to become the Internet's most lucrative business (92).

*In your Works Cited list:*

Will, George F. "Electronic Morphine." Newsweek 25 Nov. 2002: 92.

A direct quotation from the text must always appear within quotation marks.