

SAMPLE IN-CLASS ESSAY

Introductory Paragraph

hook—bridge—thesis

¹Loyalty is like glue. ²Indeed, it causes us to adhere to our goals, to others whom we love or even dislike, and to feelings or beliefs. ³Such loyalty is a hallmark of Alexandre Dumas's The Count of Monte Cristo. ⁴In this romance novel set in the wake of the French Revolution, we experience the fate of Edmond Dantès. ⁵Wrongfully imprisoned for the professional, personal, and political expedience of others, Dantès seeks revenge on those who framed him, embarking on a years-long quest to make his enemies pay for his suffering, meeting many others along the way, helping some whom he meets, hurting others whom he meets. ⁶ During this mission of retribution, Dantès and even the other characters he meets remain loyal to people, ideas, plans, and more throughout their plotline existences. ⁷To be sure, in The Count of Monte Cristo the following incidents illustrate loyalty in multifarious forms: the supposed rescue of Albert in Rome, the escape from the Château d'If, and the final meeting between Dantès and Caderousse.

1: State your hook by being creative.

- For this one, I used the first idea that came to my mind in order to simulate the testing scenario restrictions under which you will be writing.
 - Is it the most creative hook ever written? No. However, you will not have much time to revise in this type of writing situation.
- The hook must be true about the literary work you will discuss; this one already lays the groundwork for my thesis statement.
- The hook must naturally lay the groundwork for sentences 3-6.

2: Clarify your hook with one more sentence.

- A good writer is always as clear as possible.
- An extension and clarification of the hook offered in sentence 1, this sentence must naturally lead into sentences 3-4.

3: Mention the author and the title of the work **AND** begin to explain the connection between the literary work to be analyzed and your hook.

- Notice that when I mention the title, I do NOT identify the work as a novel or short story at the same time. I do that in the next sentence; you could, too.
 - (Don't write something like "In the novel *The Great Gatsby*...")

- Notice that a novel title is italicized. In your in-class essay, you would write it like this: The Count of Monte Cristo.
- Capitalize the title properly.
- In order to avoid repetition, you may refer to a novel in the following ways: **novel**, book, **literary work**, or **even a name that you yourself feel is appropriate**.

4-5: Give a very short summary of the literary work **that echoes your hook**.

- Usually, two sentences will be plenty.
- Do not go into a full-blown summary of the literary work under discussion.
- **Be sure your summary creates a logical expectation of your thesis. Summarize while foreshadowing your thesis. My hook in this example already has begun this process.**

6: Offer a bridging sentence that continues to narrow the focus of your introductory paragraph **by mentioning what you specifically intend to prove and which echoes your hook**.

7: Clarify the previous sentence by offering your thesis statement.

- In your thesis statement, you must mention the subject (the novel you're writing about) and focus (what you intend to prove about the subject).

- Use chicken foot, wording to create the expectation of a list, a colon to introduce the list, and parallelism in wording the listed items.

SPECIAL NOTE:

- **Use the literary present throughout the entire essay: all five paragraphs.**

Sample Body Paragraph for In-class Essays

One incident that illustrates several types of **loyalty** occurs when **Monte Cristo** ostensibly rescues **Albert from Luigi Vampa in Rome**. **First**, **Monte Cristo's loyalty to his revenge plan is at work beneath the surface**. **More specifically**, Monte Cristo's revenge plan involves ingratiating himself with the Morcerf family. Therefore, he shows loyalty to this plan by befriending Albert when he supposedly saves him from the Italian bandit. This, in turn, will cause the entire family to view Monte Cristo as Albert's savior, placing him in the family's good graces and laying the foundation for his revenge. On the surface it appears that Monte Cristo has only Albert's best interests at heart. However, dramatic irony is rich at this point since the reader realizes Monte Cristo is merely working his plan to get close to the Morcerf family. Albert himself has no idea of the Count's loyalty to his

revenge plan during this scene, thus underscoring the irony. **Another** way loyalty appears in this scene is the Count's loyalty to manipulation. **To explain**, Albert believes that Vampa would have killed him had the ransom not been paid; however, Albert's life was never in jeopardy. Therefore, he has been manipulated into befriending the Count based on the false pretext of his life's being in jeopardy, leading to his gratitude toward the Count. Clearly, the Count is loyal to the idea of manipulation especially when it furthers his own plans for revenge and even if it means using others. Even though a staged kidnapping features several types of loyalty, a daring prison break also features loyalty.

Topic Sentence

- subject
- focus

Analysis (blue and pink)

- State the first way loyalty can be uncovered in the chosen incident.
- Explain *how* it can be found in the chosen incident.
- State the second way loyalty can be uncovered in the chosen incident.
- Explain *how* it can be found in the chosen incident.

Transitional Sentence

- Restate your overall purpose.
- Remind of the incident you just used to prove your thesis.
- Hint about the next incident that will be used to prove your thesis.

Sample In-class Conclusion Paragraph

To be sure, The Count of Monte Cristo features multifarious forms of loyalty. First we see it when Albert is saved from an ostensible kidnapping. Additionally, loyalty appears during Edmond's daring escape from the Château d'If. Last, we see loyalty during the final meeting between Monte Cristo and Caderousse. However, loyalty permeates this novel for a much more important reason than helping to further the revenge plot of Edmond Dantès. Indeed, the loyalty in this novel teaches us that we must be careful regarding to whom or what we give our loyalty. To explain, characters in the novel and especially in the incidents above were loyal to people and ideas that were both good and bad. Loyalty to the good helped the characters; loyalty to the bad hurt them.

Therefore, we should learn from these characters and make sure we give our loyalty only to those persons and causes which are good. If we do not, our loyalty might end up binding us to people and choices that spell our own downfall or destruction—as was almost the case for Edmond Dantès in his quest for reprisal.

- **Part 1:** Opening sentence which reiterates the thesis statement without merely repeating it. This sentence must begin with an appropriate transitional word.
- **Part 2:** Recap. the main idea of each body paragraph. (Total of three sentences for this part.)
- **Part 3:** transition sentence to let reader know a final thought/insight is imminent
- **Part 4:** sentence which explicitly states ONE insightful, interesting final thought
- **Part 5:** explanation of the ONE final thought which naturally echoes the hook

Schedule (48 min.)

(5) brainstorm

(7) introduction paragraph

(9) B1

(9) B2

(9) B3

(6) conclusion paragraph

(3) edit/revise/check over