

# Essay Prep: Reading the Essay Summary

---

Class Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_

## Description

**Essay Prep: Reading the Essay** introduces students to analysis of the essay form. Before students write formal academic essays, it's important to have a sense of how professional essay writing impacts readers. Students analyze essays that reveal, inform, reflect, and persuade as they hone in on the author's message and view those ideas through the lens of their modern-day experiences.

Students will read and analyze a professional essay in the first half of the week as they practice the literary analysis structure and engage in discussion with other students. In the second half of each week, students apply literary strategies from the week's essay as they craft an original piece of writing.

The essays under examination in this class are

- "Beauty: When the Other Dancer Is the Self" by Alice Walker
- "Fairy Tales and Disability: Do I Have a Happily Ever After?" by Melanie Kennedy-Diver
- "Say My Name: The Alchemical Magic of 'Rumpelstiltskin'" by Souvankham Thammavongsa
- "Murdered by My Replica?" by Margaret Atwood

## Syllabus

### Week 1 Personal Narrative Essay

We begin the week with analysis of a personal narrative essay. Vivid description and something we call the *angle of vision* provide an entry point to this essay as we engage with the author's experience from a unique point of view. In an original writing piece, students employ vivid detail as they describe a familiar person, place, or experience from multiple perspectives.

### Week 2 Informative Essay

Strong informative essays go beyond the mere reporting of facts. In analysis, students compare previous knowledge on the topic to the author's surprising take. Writers consider a specific audience as they employ the element of surprise to inform on a topic in their area of expertise.

### Week 3 Cultural Analysis Essay

The author of this essay reflects on aspects of her cultural identity. Reflective writing ponders the tension as she writes about past experiences as seen through a modern day perspective. Students write a poem this week to explore the complexity and significance of their own experiences.

### Week 4 Persuasive Essay

Persuasive writing abounds—in blogs, opinion pieces, and especially in academic writing. We'll explore the strategies authors use to convince readers to accept their argument. A particular focus for this kind of writing is *writing voice*, and students investigate why authors use particular styles and techniques to communicate with readers. We'll end with a thinking exercise as students develop their own persuasive arguments.

## Common Core and Academic Standards Support

What follows is a word bank and set of skills associated with this class. Use them to craft your own learning narrative for use in year-end evaluations, charter school reports, or any other accountability source.

### Word Bank

Argument  
Audience  
Counterargument  
Cultural analysis essay  
Informative essay  
Metacognitive awareness  
Metaphor  
Opening Hook  
Personal narrative essay  
Persuasive essay  
Point of view/Perspective  
Simile  
Theme  
Vivid detail  
Voice

### Core Skills

Cite textual evidence to support conclusions  
Compare theme and content to personal experience  
Construct an argument that debunks a counterargument  
Convey factual information using a surprising take  
Convey personal identity using poetic structure  
Determine central ideas and themes  
Evaluate persuasive writing techniques  
Evoke reaction (emotion, call to action) through writing  
Identify point of view  
Inform a specific audience  
Read diverse sources  
Relate essay content to modern experience  
Utilize simile and metaphor to make comparisons  
Write detailed, organized, structured original narratives  
Write from multiple perspectives