

# Writing an Interpretive Essay

Consider using with *Voyages in English 2011*

Grade 6—Chapter 6, Lesson 6

Grade 7—Chapter 5, Lesson 2, 6 or Writer’s Workshop

Grade 8—Chapter 6



## Teach

Explain to students that an interpretive essay is writing in which they analyze, evaluate, and give supported opinions about a book, movie, poem, or article. An interpretive essay contains the following elements:

- A strong thesis
- A well-organized introduction, body, and conclusion
- A summation of the plot, characters, and setting
- A clear analysis of the theme, importance of the setting, and impact of literary and poetic devices
- Personal opinions and supporting evidence
- A summarizing conclusion

## Practice

Model for students how to choose a thesis, or a statement that interprets the theme or message of a story. Guide students to list three pieces of supporting evidence from the chosen print or visual media. For example:

- In the film *Up*, we learn that it is only by letting go of our attachments that we truly become free.
- In the book *The Lord of the Rings*, the character Gandalf provides experience and wisdom.

Invite students to discuss their evidence in small groups.

## Apply

Have students choose a thesis and list three pieces of supporting evidence from a book or a movie. Have them meet in small groups to present their theses and supporting evidence and discuss their ideas with their peers. Remind them that opinions should be clearly supported through specific references. Have students use their refined ideas to write a three-page essay that includes the features outlined on the rubric.

## Assess

Use the rubric on the following page to evaluate students on their understanding of an interpretive essay.

*Listening and Speaking Connection:* Invite students to share their interpretive essays in small groups. After each student presents, have the group use the rubric to discuss whether the writer included all parts of an interpretive essay. Remind students to withhold judgment about each writer’s thesis until they have heard all supporting evidence. Ask the group to give positive, constructive feedback about each essay.

# Writing an Interpretive Essay

POINTS

<b>Ideas</b>	
Strong thesis	
Clearly analyzed subject	
Supporting evidence connected to opinions	
<b>Organization</b>	
Well-organized and of adequate length (three-page minimum)	
Includes title, plot summary, analysis, and supporting details	
Includes introduction, body, and summarizing conclusion	
<b>Voice</b>	
Tone appropriate for audience	
<b>Word Choice</b>	
Precise words	
Persuasive words	
<b>Sentence Fluency</b>	
Structures that connect facts to opinions	
<b>Conventions</b>	
Correct grammar, usage, and spelling	
Correct punctuation and capitalization	
<b>Presentation</b>	
Easy to read, typed or handwritten	
Includes essay title	