

BURKE'S PENTAD AND LITERARY ANALYSIS

(This assessment is an expansion of 2A.I)

Performance Standard 2A.J

Each student will read a work of literature and answer the questions from Burke's Pentad (attached) as preparation for the writing of an evaluation of the author's writing technique and intended message. Each student will then select two or more areas of the Pentad as his/her focus for the analysis and write a theme evaluating the author's work from that combined point of view accordingly:

- *Developing Pentad answers:* answer questions from the Pentad; record points from the story in the answers; evidence inferential connections.
- *Developing literary analysis:* indicate the focus of the analysis in the theses statement; address the focus of the analysis in body paragraphs; cover points listed in the Pentad section; summarize the analysis in the conclusion.
- *Using evidence from the text:* support points of analysis with references to the text; use references to explain/support the student's point.

Procedures

1. *In order to understand how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning (2A)*, students should experience sufficient learning opportunities to develop the following:
 - Evaluate how the author uses literary elements and techniques to achieve the intended effect.
 - Support assertions with evidence from the text.
 - Critique the author's style or form.
 - Evaluate an understanding of the interrelationships among reader, author, form and text.
 - Evaluate how a text reflects a culture, society, or historical period.
2. Have students review and discuss the assessment task and how the rubric will be used to evaluate their work.
3. Students will have practiced the application of Burke's Pentad to several works of literature.
4. Each student will independently answer the Burke's Pentad questions about a literary work.
5. Each student will select two or more of the five areas (e.g. Action, Actor-Agent, Scene, Means, Purpose).
6. Each student will write a theme about the literary work that focuses on the analysis of that aspect of the story. The student will connect the selected components of the Pentad in this analysis, emphasizing their interaction in the story.
7. Evaluate each student's performance using the rubric. Add each student's scores to determine the performance level.

Examples of Student Work not available

Time Requirements

- One class period

Resources

- Writing materials, including available technology
- Copies of Burke's Pentad
- Copies of the literary work
- Burke's Pentad and Literary Analysis Rubric

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A Brief Explanation of Its Use

The Pentad that is attached is a heuristic device that helps students analyze a work of literature through a series of questions designed to dig out all the important information from the story. The Pentad is organized in five sets of questions (i.e., Action, Actor-Agent, Scene, Means, and Purpose), which cover the major content areas of literary analysis. In a formative mode, students may work alone or may brainstorm in small groups to find ALL the answers to each question in the heuristic. In this summative assessment, each student will work independently. After answering the questions to the best of his/her ability, the student may select any area of the Pentad as the focus of the literary analysis which will be presented in the theme. The analysis may focus on how that aspect of the story contributes to the impact on the reader, how the author's use of this part of the analysis works to present the story realistically, or how the author's use of the part of the analysis supports the author's purpose for writing.

Burke's Pentad began as Kenneth Burke's system of dramatic criticism presented in his work A Grammar of Motives. William F. Irmscher who edited The Holt Guide to English: A Contemporary Handbook of Rhetoric, Language, and Literature, formulated this set of questions as a brief outline of his literary analysis technique. This particular set of questions was taken from the 2nd edition (1979). *A pair of parenthesis have been added to help explain the intent of certain questions in the Action and Purpose sections.*

BURKE'S PENTAD

Action:

What happened?

What is happening?

What will happen? What could happen?

What is it? (e.g., an act of revenge, justice, blind chance)

Actor-Agent:

Who did it?

Who is doing it?

What did it?

What kind of agent is it?

Scene:

Where did it happen? Where is it happening? Where will it happen?

When did it happen?

What is the background?

Means:

How did the agent do it?

What means or devices were used?

Purpose:

Why?

Why not?(What did the agent want to accomplish and why did he/she/it have to use this approach to achieve the purpose? Why not do it another way?)

William F. Irscher. The Holt Guide to English: A Contemporary Handbook of Rhetoric, Language, and Literature, 2nd. Ed. New York: Holt, 1979.

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NAME _____ DATE _____

- Exceeds 11 - 12 total points
- Meets 8 - 10 total points
- Approaches 5 - 7 total points
- Begins 3 - 4 total points

	WORKSHEET	PAPER	
	Pentad Answers	Literary Analysis	Use of Evidence from the Text
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All questions from the Pentad are answered. • Most pertinent points from the story are recorded in the answers. • Inferential connections are evident in several answers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The thesis statement clearly indicates the focus of the analysis. • All body paragraphs address the focus of the analysis. • All points listed in the Pentad section are covered. • Conclusion effectively summarizes the analysis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All points of analysis are supported with specific references to the text. • All references explain/support the student's point.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many questions from the Pentad are answered. • Many pertinent points from the story are recorded in the answers. • Inferential connections are evident in a few answers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The thesis statement clearly indicates the focus of the analysis. • All body paragraphs address the focus of the analysis. • Most points listed in the Pentad section are covered. • Conclusion generally summarizes the analysis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most points of analysis are supported with specific references to the text. • Most references explain/support the student's point.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some questions from the Pentad are answered. Three or Four of the five Pentad areas may be answered. • Some pertinent points from the story are recorded in the answers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thesis statement generally indicates the focus of the analysis. Some ambiguity may be present. • Some body paragraphs address the focus of the analysis. • Some points listed in the Pentad section are covered. • Conclusion minimally summarizes the analysis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some points of analysis are supported with specific references to the text. • Some references explain/support the student's point.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few or no questions from the Pentad are answered. Only one or two of the five Pentad areas may be answered. • Few or no pertinent points from the story are recorded in the answers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thesis statement may indicate the focus of the analysis, or thesis statement absent. • Few or no body paragraphs address the focus of the analysis. • Few or no points listed in the Pentad section are covered. • No conclusion is evident. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few or no points of analysis are supported with specific references to the text. • Few or no references explain/support the student's point.
Score			