

**Length: 750 words.**

We began the term with Zadie Smith's essay, "Generation Why?" (2010) and E. M. Forster's story "The Machine Stops" (1909). Both writers depict different versions of the present and future, envisioning how aspects of communication, family, and education may change. By contrast, Sylvia Plath's novel *The Bell Jar* critiques the world of midcentury Manhattan, from its use of the death penalty, to its limited roles for women. Your task in this essay is to pair either Smith's essay or Forster's story with Plath's novel, asserting an argument about the worlds they address. What futures does each narrative suggest is possible? How does each suggest that the present can change?

750 words is not long (approximately three pages), so you will need to select a narrow focus that you can examine in depth. You are also welcome to analyze Plath's poems, letters, journals, or interpretations of her work, but make sure that you cite them. As you begin to draft your essay, you can build from your blog postings, addressing places or ideas in greater depth, but make sure that your essay reads fluidly.

You must demonstrate appropriate use of quotations and cite all sources that you consult, including webpages. Use parenthetical citations to acknowledge when you are quoting or citing others' ideas. **It is plagiarism to use others' words or ideas without citing them.** This is an academic essay, so it should demonstrate appropriate conventions, including tone, language, and word choice. You should avoid using the first person, I.

Remember, you do not need to summarize the texts we have read. Assume your readers have read them and only tell them what they need to know to understand your points.

Your essay must be typed, double spaced, in twelve-point, and Times New Roman font.

Submit your rough draft and final drafts in a Word document on Blackboard at least thirty minutes before class on the dates indicated above.

### **Developing Your Argument**

**S**elect quotations and an image to analyze. You only need to quote when the language of the quotation matters to your argument. Otherwise, you can put a quotation in your own words.

**A**s you return to the text, begin to formulate an argument by asking what links the evidence that you have selected. Ask yourself how they differ from each other and from other moments. These questions will allow you to answer why each instance is significant to the novel as a whole.

**A**lso consider the form and style of the examples you select. Analyze the word choice and tone. Where in the novel do the instances that you note take place? Why is this significant?

**B**e creative and take intellectual risks. Show readers of your essay what you want them to see. Remember that each reader interprets a text differently.

## Essay Structure

As you are planning your essay, consider analyzing two to three quotations or examples per paragraph. If quotations are more than four lines in length they need to be indented as a block quotation. Be selective and only quote the words, phrases, or lines that are necessary to your argument. In addition, fully analyze the quotations you have selected. Sometimes you might deal with only one quotation or example in a paragraph if it demands that much explication.

Your introductory paragraph should introduce your claim and why it is significant. Remember that your introduction can change up until the last minute and often it is a good technique to make your conclusion your introduction.

Each topic sentence should assert the argument of the body paragraph it begins. Your analysis in each paragraph should support the topic sentence. The topic sentence of each paragraph should support your claim in the introduction.

The conclusion of your essay does not need to repeat what you have already said. In light of what you have argued, make a connection to a larger context and suggest ideas for further research.

## Assessment Rubric

### Your essay will be assessed using the following criteria:

*Exceptional.* A thought-provoking essay, clearly written and carefully argued, demonstrating creativity and thorough engagement with texts.

The essay supports a focused thesis, considering its implications.

Quotations are analyzed and incorporated effectively, functioning as a part of sentences.

Topic sentences support the thesis and state what each paragraph argues.

The essay demonstrates creativity, approaching the topic in a new way, carefully reading texts and interpreting evidence.

Sentences throughout demonstrate skillful, engaging use of language.

The essay's title draws in readers, introducing them to the essay's argument.

The conclusion draws the argument to a close, makes a connection to a new context, and suggesting directions for future research.

The essay demonstrates awareness of its own limitations or implications, and it considers multiple perspectives when appropriate.

Images (when relevant) are effectively incorporated, interpreted, and cited.

The essay demonstrates correct use of grammar, punctuation, and MLA style (including a list of works cited).

*Strong.* Essay contains a thesis, supported by analysis of quotations and examples.

The implications of the thesis could be considered further.

The organization of ideas could be stronger.

Quotations could be more fully analyzed.

Conclusion could consider further future directions for research.

Topic sentences could more effectively address what each paragraph argues.

Essay could demonstrate further revision and proofreading, including demonstration of MLA style (and list of works cited).