



THE POWER OF PERCEPTION (THE DARK KNIGHT) GRAPHIC ESSAY

For this assignment you are asked to compare and contrast *The Dark Knight* with one of the other texts studied in class—“*The Warrior*,” “*Pride and Prometheus*,” “*Born Bad*,” or “*A Perfect Day for Bananafish*”—to create a *Graphic (point-form) Essay*. The following planner will help guide you in the construction of your response.

1. TITLE / THEME STATEMENT



Create a *Theme Statement* for your *Graphic Essay* that will act as your title. It should address—make reference to—the following topic:

Discuss the idea(s) presented by the text creator(s) about the impact of an individual’s perception(s) on their response to events or circumstances.

EXAMPLE: If you were using Theodore Thomas’ “Test” as your source text, and were discussing the concept of *taking responsibility for self*, you might use the following as your title/theme statement:

To Take Responsibility is a “Test” of Self

REMEMBER:

1. Theme must be expressed in a complete sentence. “Love and rejection” is not a theme statement. It is just an indication of the topic of the story. What in particular is the author saying about love and rejection?
2. Theme should describe the general meaning of a text, not specific events, actions or characters. Do not use the names of characters in the text when stating the theme.
3. The theme must hold true for the text as a whole, not just part of it. Pay particular attention to the text’s conclusion to make sure that the outcome matches what you think the theme is.
4. Avoid using familiar statements, or clichés, such as, “honesty is the best policy” to express the theme. The theme should be a generalization about life stated in your own words.

2. THESIS STATEMENT



Your *Thesis Statement* is based on the *Theme Statement* you created and will be what you prove with your evidence (quotations / graphics / personal connection). It should include a consequence (or so-what factor).

Remember that you are comparing and contrasting two texts; your thesis should be reflective of this.

EXAMPLE: *In the short story, "Test," Theodore Thomas develops the idea that when one fails to take responsibility for one's actions, there are often unforeseen, serious consequences for self. This is demonstrated initially when Robert Proctor believes that he has passed his driver's test, however, as the orderlies come to take him away he consequently is unable to reconcile that his failure to accept responsibility has led to a loss of self—his commitment to the asylum.*

The formula for writing a *Thesis Statement* is:

In the _____ [genre], _____ [title], _____ [author] develops the idea that _____ [topic/theme statement]. This is demonstrated (from / initially) _____, (through / however) _____, (to / consequently) _____.

REMEMBER:

For multiple texts, only the beginning changes:

The _____ [genre], _____ [title], by _____ [author], and the _____ [genre], _____ [title], by _____ [author] develops the idea that _____ [topic/theme statement]. This is demonstrated (from / initially) _____, (through / however) _____, (to / consequently) _____.

3. QUOTATIONS / EVIDENCE



Choose four quotations that can be used to prove your thesis. Your quotations should be short, powerful, and cited with a page number (including those from The Dark Knight—the script is available on line if you simply Google it).

Two of your quotations will come from The Dark Knight and two from your other text.

EXAMPLE: *"You failed your license test. You're sick and need treatment" (Thomas 3).*

When possible, avoid evidence / quotations that are longer than three lines of text and, more importantly, those that include multiple in-citation punctuation.

The example above is one line long but includes a period (.) making it an example of in-citation punctuation.

So, the following quotation would be considered unacceptable because it comes dangerously close to infringing on the first rule and definitely breaks the second:

REMEMBER:

"Nobody should want to drive a car after going through what you just went through. It should take months before you can even think of driving again. But you're ready to drive right now. Killing people doesn't seem to bother you. We can't let your kind run around loose anymore" (Thomas 3).

Use your judgment and select the best possible evidence rather than the cliché or obvious examples.

4. GRAPHIC / SYMBOLIC VISUAL



Choose a graphic for each quotation; a representation of the concept(s) of the quotation. In other words, it should be figurative, not literal.

EXAMPLE:

Here is an example of a symbolic visual representing the quotation taken from the text of “Test” and the topic of *responsibility for self*.



REMEMBER:

If discussing Dolphus Raymond’s drinking, in *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, choosing a bottle for the symbol is literal. It represents the *drinking*, but not the significance of the quotation. Instead, consider a blurred photograph of a person, or a picture of a mask. These would serve to represent how Dolphus hides behind his “drinking” to cover up the fact that he is in love with a black woman—something that the town folks of Maycomb would find appalling in the behaviour of a white man.

5. EXPLANATION



Outline why the information you have presented (quotation / picture) matters? This is to be done in a concise format and follow the Context/Evidence/Analysis (CEA) model. This is the bulk of your argument and where the most care and attention should be taken. This assignment functions as not only an assessment of your understanding of film and short story but of your ability to construct a proper essay (done at a later point).

EXAMPLE:

Robert Proctor, in “Test,” failed to take responsibility for his actions and acknowledge that even though it was a simulation, he still killed people while taking his driver’s test; maybe he should not be driving at all. It takes the uniform man to say, “You failed your license test. You’re sick and need treatment” (Thomas 3) before Robert begins to realize the consequences of his actions. It is like when someone in a position of power, say a teacher or president, does something without thinking—it can have an effect on more than just themselves. If a teacher calls out a student in front of the class they undermine their authority, and more importantly, damage the relationship between student and teacher. If President Bush fails to utilize the phone properly, he puts the United States—and possible the world—at risk. How can you call off a nuclear arms strike if you cannot master up from down?

REMEMBER:

Here is how CEA should look: *This is the best essay ever because “it includes a proper CEA integration of a quotation,” (#) suggesting that the author understands the importance of explaining, not dropping, evidence.*

6. PERSONAL CONNECTION



Write a concluding statement / paragraph that sums up your essay. It should refer back to your thesis and include a final thought / generalization about life and people in general. This section is also intended to explore how a personal event can prove your selected thesis. Your personal connection must have the following elements: 1) a personal story that is easily related to the film / short story as well as the subjects of the graphics, and 2) it must clearly connect to your specific theme.

EXAMPLE:

Growing up, my father—having done the best that he could—often got offended by the fact that I did not appreciate all the things that I had. He would get angry, call me names, and say things that I know now he regrets. At the time, I hated him for this.

The problem is that I never took responsibility for my own actions. He was so frustrated by the unrealistic expectations I was putting on him. He did not know how to interact with me, to be a father, because the world around him had changed so fast. Now that I am older, I look back on these moments and I appreciate how much my father has done for me and how much of my life I am thankful for because of him. I now think about how much harm I am doing to the people around me because of the things I say, the things I text, the things I post on Facebook. I recognize that without me taking responsibility for my behavior, my father and I would not have a relationship today. This is what really matters.

There is no test; just consequences I / we must be willing to live with.

The purpose of this section is to address the third principle of basic reading comprehension:

1) What does it *Say*? 2) What does it *Mean*? 3) **Why does it *Matter*?**

REMEMBER:

- How does this piece connect to your own life?
- What are the implications (possible outcomes or results)?
- Why does it matter to me or others?
- Why is it important (to the text as a whole)?
- What is the significance?
- What implications does it hold for a given group of people or for people in general?



To Take Responsibility is a “Test” of Self

← TITLE/THEME STATEMENT x 1

In the short story, “Test,” Theodore Thomas develops the idea that when one fails to take responsibility for one’s actions, there are often unforeseen, serious consequences for self. This is demonstrated initially when Robert Proctor believes that he has passed his driver’s test, however, as the orderlies come to take him away he consequently is unable to reconcile that his failure to accept responsibility has led to a loss of self—his commitment to the asylum.

← THESIS STATEMENT x 1

“You failed your license test. You’re sick and need treatment” (Thomas 3)

← QUOTATION/EVIDENCE x 4/6



← GRAPHIC/SYMBOLIC VISUAL x 4/6

Robert Proctor, in “Test,” failed to take responsibility for his actions and acknowledge that even though it was a simulation, he still killed people while taking his driver’s test; maybe he should not be driving at all. It takes the uniform man to say, “You failed your license test. You’re sick and need treatment” (Thomas 3) before Robert begins to realize the consequences of his actions. It is like when someone in a position of power, say a teacher or president, does something without thinking—it can have an effect on more than just themselves. If a teacher calls out a student in front of the class they undermine their authority, and more importantly, damage the relationship between student and teacher. If President Bush fails to utilize the phone properly, he puts the United States—and possible the world—at risk. How can you call off a nuclear arms strike if you cannot master up from down?

← EXPLANATION x 4/6

Growing up, my father—having done the best that he could—often got offended by the fact that I did not appreciate all the things that I had. He would get angry, call me names, and say things that I know now he regrets. At the time, I hated him for this.

The problem is that I never took responsibility for my own actions. He was so frustrated by the unrealistic expectations I was putting on him. He did not know how to interact with me, to be a father, because the world around him had changed so fast. Now that I am older, I look back on these moments and I appreciate how much my father has done for me and how much of my life I am thankful for because of him. I now think about how much harm I am doing to the people around me because of the things I say, the things I text, the things I post on Facebook. I recognize that without me taking responsibility for my behavior, my father and I would not have a relationship today. This is what really matters.

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← PERSONAL CONNECTION x 1