

Summer Reading Assignment English IV CC

- 1) Read Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis*. Complete the essay below.
- 2) Read Malcolm Gladwell's *The Outliers* [School-wide Reading Requirement]

Formal paper: Literary analysis of Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis*

Metamorphosis is a richly layered and textured story that is open to many interpretations, that is, religious, philosophical, autobiographical, Freudian, and mythical, to name a few.

Choose ONE of the following topics. Write a two-page, well-documented critical analysis. You must include cited page numbers when referring to specific details.

Writing Topic Choice # 1:

The term metamorphosis means a complete and profound change in form, structure, and substance or a change in form from one stage to the next in the life of an organism. The central change in *Metamorphosis* is the change in Gregor's life, from an ordinary man and traveling salesman to a gigantic insect. Gregor's transformation causes other remarkable changes in the story—changes that directly bear on his family. Write a paper that shows how Gregor's major change in life also affects the lives of his parents and sister.

Sample Thesis: Change is the essence of life, and in *Metamorphosis*, the theme of change is organic to the action, dictating the unfolding of the plot and influencing the characters' behavior and destiny.

Writing Topic Choice #2:

Symbolism often appears in modern literature as a name, event, action, or object that embodies more than its literal, concrete meaning. Like many of Franz Kafka's works, *Metamorphosis* is rich in symbolism. Symbolism allows the reader to penetrate the complexity and mystery of a work of art with greater understanding and insight.

Discuss and analyze the symbolism in *Metamorphosis*. Try to focus on only those symbols that you think may have relevance to the story's ideas and themes and characters.

Sample Thesis: The symbolism found in *Metamorphosis* helps the reader to understand Gregor's inner life better and illuminates the conflicts he experiences after his metamorphosis.

Some symbols to think about: giant insect, apples, the number 3 [3 lodgers, 3 sections to the novella, 3 chimes of the clock, 3 remaining family members], the three lodgers, the cleaning lady

Writing Topic Choice # 3

A source of frustration for Franz Kafka was his domineering father, a powerful, robust, imposing man, successful in his business, who considered his son a weakling and unfit for life. Kafka's childhood and youth were overshadowed by this conflict with his father, whom he respected, even admired, and at the same time feared and subconsciously hated.

Write a critical analysis of *Metamorphosis* that discusses Kafka's autobiographical relationship with his father. How does the novella demonstrate revealing evidence of the many grievances Kafka held against his own dad—later depicted in his *Letter to His Father*?

Sample Thesis: *Metamorphosis* is not only a riveting, but odd tale; it is also a blatant and revealing testament to Kafka's own volatile relationship that he had with his overbearing father.

Length: 2 typed pages, Times Roman 12, double-space

Due date: First day of class in September

- ✓ Don't forget to include your thesis as the last sentence of the first paragraph.
- ✓ Don't forget your MLA heading, title, and referencing citations.
- ✓ Be sure to include specific textual reference.