

Name:
Date:

Period:
Ms. Lopez

The Essay Project: Requirements & Explanation

The purpose of this project is for you to think critically about an essay independently and to expose you to many different essays in a more informal setting.

For your individually selected essay:

- ❖ Write a **brief** summary of the essay (Be concise but complete; this shows that you understand the essay.)
- ❖ Identify the essay's **thesis** (The thesis may be *explicitly* stated or *implicitly* communicated.)
- ❖ Identify the essay's **purpose** (to inform, to entertain, to persuade - remember, an essay may have multiple purposes)
- ❖ Write down any **new vocabulary words** and define them (*include the part of speech*).
- ❖ Identify and discuss the use of **literary devices**, effective literary elements, patterns of organization...in other words, any literary techniques or rhetorical strategies you can find about which you can write intelligently. Identify the term, quote the example from the text, cite the paragraph of the quote, and **comment on its purpose or its effect**. You are required to have five. [Hint: Looking at the techniques addressed in the questions at the end of the essay will help you complete this requirement.]
- ❖ You may be asked to present your findings to the class in an informal setting.

For all of the class' selected essays:

- ❖ Each student will read *all the essays chosen by classmates*. (Copies of each essay will be provided along with a suggested reading schedule.)
- ❖ Each student will record & define vocabulary words (include the part of speech) *for all essays chosen by classmates*. A vocabulary word is any word that you do not know. **Two vocabulary quizzes will be administered using words taken from the class' chosen essays.**
- ❖ Each student will list the *ten essays that were most enjoyable* and provide one reason with a specific detail about why reading each of those ten essays was enjoyable. You may not repeat a single reason more than twice. (For example, you could say, "I like 'Riders on the Earth Together' because I agree with its thesis that everyone in the world is related, and we should treat each other more kindly because of that.")
- ❖ Each student will list the *ten essays that were the not enjoyable* and provide one reason with a specific detail about why reading each of those ten essays was not enjoyable. You may not repeat a single reason more twice. (For example, you could say, "I dislike 'Riders on the Earth Together' because I was not familiar with the allusions to Dante and the 'philosophers of the absurd.'")



Sample Essay Project for “Riders on the Earth Together: Brothers in the Eternal Cold”

Summary: The essay is about how people see the Earth, see themselves, and how they behave based on these ideas. When people thought they and the Earth were the center of the world, they selfishly hurt other people. People then thought that the world was meaningless and random and lived in a world full of death and despair. Now that people have seen the Earth from space, they see how small and fragile it truly is. Because of this new knowledge, the speaker hopes individuals will begin to identify with everyone on the planet as one human family of “brothers.”

Purpose: to persuade readers to treat one another better

Thesis: All of humanity should see itself as bound together in brotherhood because we share the same planet.

Vocabulary (with parts of speech):

1. CONCEPTION -n.- a general idea; the sum of a person's ideas and beliefs
2. FARCE -n.- a ridiculous or empty show
3. PREPOSTEROUS -adj.- ridiculous; contrary to nature, reason, or common sense

(*Of course, I know these words, but I wanted a sample. Be sure you can define all of the words if you say there no new words*)

Literary Analysis:

1. The **metaphor** in paragraph 3 refers to the Earth as “that tiny raft.” This device creates an *effective image of the Earth as the only safe place for humans in the vast sea of infinite space.*
2. *The author again creates the image of the earth as a raft and space as the sea again in the **alliterative** statement found in paragraph 3: “little, lonely, floating planet.”*
3. Paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 each contain an **allusion** to “Dante’s” *Inferno*; the reference to Dante’s conception of heaven and hell, and people’s view of it in relation to their view of the world *helps the readers understand how people’s views have changed over time.*
4. The use of **parallel structure** at the end of paragraph 1, “and from that high place we ruled and killed and conquered...” and paragraph 2, “in world-wide wars or in blasted cities or in concentration camps” *gives each consequence of man’s conception of himself equal weight and is a clear pattern that the reader can follow easily.*
5. In paragraph 2, the **spatial organization** of the prepositional phrases “in the solar system of a minor star off at the edge of an inconsiderable galaxy in the immeasurable distances of space...” *takes the reader from our solar system far out into deep space, showing how far off from anything else we are.*

NOTE: The italics are added to emphasize the section where you are commenting on the devices’ effects. You do not need to do this in your analysis, but please remember that you will need not only to identify the device but also **to comment on its effect.**