

ETS 142
SUBJECTIVITY ESSAY – SUGGESTIONS FOR DRAFTING

Directions: Use this handout to guide you while drafting your actual Unit Essay. Today, use it to construct an outline for a hypothetical essay focusing on one character in *Fences*.

Practice incorporating these **main concepts** into your analysis.

- Subject / Subjectivity / Subject position
- Interpellation
- Agency

Body – Incorporating these concepts into your analysis of a text: Consider:

- Which features most clearly define the character's subjectivity in his / her own eyes? What are the aspects of the character that define his / her subjectivity in the eyes of others?

- What are the sources of power for the various characters in this environment? What avenues are available for them to gain or maintain power?

- What personal, interpersonal, or environmental factors therefore define or challenge your character's subjectivity / subject position?

- How does the character respond to having been positioned as a subject in this way?

- What is the result of the character's response (i.e., what is the outcome of the agency exhibited by this character)?

- How does the text encourage the audience to understand the character, his / her struggle, and the outcome of that struggle? In other words, what do you perceive to be the preferred (i.e., dominant, hegemonic) reading of the text?

- Review the above. If a reader were to offer a negotiated or oppositional (i.e., counter-hegemonic) reading of this text, what would be at issue? Consider: What is interesting / revealing / strange / problematic about how *this text* reinforces or challenges our perceptions of *these characters'* subjectivity? About the agency exhibited by these characters? About how the text engages the paradigms, narratives, myths, and ideologies associated with this kind of story? About the degree to which the text reinforces or challenges them?

Conclusion – Exploring implications: Consider these questions:

- Why do these issues matter? Who wins and who loses when people uncritically read this text? Who wins and loses when the text is read critically? What is at stake?

(Note: Be comprehensive—your conclusion could very well be longer than one paragraph.)

Introduction – Establishing an interpretive context:

- What information would you need to introduce about the text and the cultural context in which it appeared?
- What broader issues would you need to introduce to begin to establish what is at stake for the *kinds of* subjects portrayed in the text. What research would you include to substantiate the importance of these issues? (Note: it is not mandatory for your claim to appear in the first paragraph of the essay.)
- Write a claim about the character as you would initially state it. This should include the aspects of subjectivity you will emphasize.
- In the conclusion, what would an evolved statement of the claim sound like?