

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the passage for your chosen novels and complete the following activities. This activity is due 12/18.

## Part One - Historical Readings

Go to <https://www.davidson-eng.net/> and open the AP English page. Find the section concerned with the 19th century novels. Under Supplemental Resources, locate the short readings that explain contexts for 19th century English culture. You are going to read two of these selections.

If you are reading *Emma*, read “The Governess” and “Women.” If you are reading *Jane Eyre*, read “Women” and “Changing 18th Century Attitudes toward Class and Social Rank.” If you are reading *Great Expectations*, read “Middle Class Culture of Respectability” and “Social Mobility and the Middle and Upper Classes.” If you are reading *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, read “Middle Class Culture of Respectability” and “Social Mobility and the Middle and Upper Classes.”

- 1) Identify five relevant facts from the two readings. You must have at least one fact from each of the two readings.
- 2) Record these facts in paraphrase along with parenthetical reference. Do not use direct quotation.
- 3) Next to the fact, explain its relevance to understanding some aspect of social and economic status in the passage. This should be no more than three sentences.

## Part Two – Diction and Imagery

- 1) Identify three relevant words, phrases, or images whose connotation has some relevance to social and/or economic status.
- 2) Record these words, phrases, or images along with parenthetical reference (just use the chapter number). Use direct quotation.
- 3) Next to word, phrase, or image, explain the relevance of its connotation to understanding some aspect of social and economic status in the passage. This should be no more than three sentences.

## Part Three - Paragraph

- 1) Given the facts, diction, imagery, and analysis, write a topic sentence that takes a position about what the passage is establishing about some aspect of some issue related to social and/or economic status. Connecting it to characterization is one easy strategy for doing this (e.g., connecting an attitude or personality trait to economic or social status).
- 2) Write the body of the paragraph using evidence from Parts I and II. You must have at least one fact from Part I synthesized into your argument, and you must discuss the connotation of diction or imagery at least once in the paragraph.
- 3) Both the references from the primary and secondary sources must have parenthetical reference, though your primary evidence all have the same citation (the chapter from the novel).

# Model

## Sample Passage from *My Brilliant Friend*:

According to Rino, Lila's older brother, she had learned to read at the age of around three by looking at the letters and pictures in his primer. She would sit next to him in the kitchen while he was doing his homework, and she learned more than he did.

Rino was almost six years older than Lila; he was a fearless boy who shone in all the courtyard and street games, especially spinning a top. But reading, writing, arithmetic, learning poems by heart were not for him. When he was scarcely ten his father, Fernando, had begun to take him every day to his tiny shoemaker's shop, in a narrow side street that ran off the *stradone*, to teach him the craft of resoling shoes. We girls, when we met him, smelled on him the odor of dirty feet, of old uppers, of glue, and we made fun of him, we called him shoe-soler. Maybe that's why he boasted that he was at the origin of his sister's virtuosity. But in reality he had never had a primer, and hadn't sat for even a minute, ever, to do homework. Impossible therefore that Lila had learned from his scholastic labors. It was more likely that she had precociously learned how the alphabet worked from the sheets of newspaper in which customers wrapped the old shoes and which her father sometimes brought home and read to the family the most interesting local news items.

## Sample Entry for Part I

- In the mid-20th century, Italian literacy rates exceeded 50% as a whole, but they were much lower in southern Italy (UNESCO 191).

This helps contextualize both Lila's achievement and Rino's lack of achievement. As poor, working class people in an underdeveloped part of the country, neither child are really expected to learn. That Lila is motivated enough to do this on her own, then, is surprising for more than just the precocious age at which she does it.

## Sample Entry for Part II

"fearless boy" (2.7)

That Ferrante frames the adjective in context of childhood games helps to establish its association with (physical) activity-- defined in opposition to more contemplative activities (like studying). In other words, masculine risk-taking is conceived in terms of material, not intellectual, pursuits. As such, Rino's transition from childhood play into physical labor (and eventual working class career) is a natural one, especially given that masculine gender ideals push boys into these roles (evident from the positive connotation of the diction choice).

## Sample Paragraph

In characterizing Rino as active and impatient, Ferrante helps to define the working-class, masculine ideals for the era in which the novel is set. For example, Rino is described by Elena as a "fearless boy" in context of the childhood games in which he excelled. The association with physical activity ("courtyard and street

The topic sentence takes an interpretive position on the text. It also doesn't just say that the literary text reflects the historical context. Doing this essentially says that the literary work proves that history is true (which isn't a terribly useful observation to make).

You have to establish context for the quotes, especially with snippet quotes like I'm using here. Do it before or after, but just writing something like, "*The author uses the word 'fearless' and this connotes ...*" isn't good enough.

Quotes for diction and imagery analysis should be short like this. I don't have a parenthetical reference because all my quotes in the paragraph have the same cite (2.7), so I only cite the last instance of use before I change sources.

Don't forget to incorporate your analysis from Part I and Part II. You've already done the work.

games”) is opposed to more contemplative activities like studying, since Rino “hadn’t sat for even a minute, ever, to do homework” (2.7). In other words, masculine risk-taking (his *fearlessness*) is conceived here in terms of material, not intellectual, pursuits. In this culture, action and courage are positively evaluated for men in terms of their physicality. More than this, though, since these sorts of actions are one part of the physical/intellectual binary, the implication is that the corresponding opposite is less desirable-- at least in terms of masculine gender norms for Rino’s social and economic class. At the very least, it establishes that *not* choosing to engage in intellectual endeavors is an acceptable life path for young men in this setting. This is especially true in context of southern Italy, where 1950s literacy rates were lower than 50% (UNESCO 191) and a lack of economic opportunities often pushed children to leave school early (Pacione 441). In this world, working class men were not expected to do well in school, and though the children later mock Rino for the tangible markers of his working class future-- described in terms of the olfactory image of “the odor of dirty feet, of old uppers, of glue” (2.7)-- the transition from physical play to physical labor is a smooth one. Thus, Rino’s unwillingness to sit still and study is framed as a potentially positive character trait, as it helps to establish him in his eventual adult niche in society.

You must discuss connotation. This is non-negotiable, and it has to be developed at more length than simply positive/negative. At the very least, you have to explain *why* it is positive or negative, and if you’re doing something more sophisticated, you have to explain how the connotation or associations are created.

I am beginning my transition into the secondary sources part of the paragraph.

Use paraphrase, not quotation for the secondary source/s.

When you’re commenting on facts from secondary sources, you want to discuss the fact’s relevance and implications to the primary source (the literary text). Do not merely restate or summarize the information.

Notice I reversed the usual *image, then connotation* structure, as I establish first the association of *poverty* before the snippet quote. I’m just trying to show you different ways of doing it.

I don’t spend a lot of time with this image, as it’s not my main evidence. I’m just using it here to shore up my argument (in this case, dismissing a potential objection to my argument).

Make sure you return to the ideas in your topic sentence-- especially if you haven’t *explicitly* developed it. Ideally, this should actually be concluding something, rather than simply restating the topic sentence.