

High School Template PDF – Detailed Guide

Overview

For **Grades 9–12** (ages 14–18), this template emphasizes **literary analysis, critical thinking, and formal academic style**. Students should engage with themes, author’s craft, and broader contexts, using evidence and adhering to citation standards.

Template Structure

1. Introduction (125–150 words)

Purpose: Establish context, present a nuanced thesis, and engage a scholarly audience.

Structure:

- **Hook:** Literary quote, provocative question, or cultural reference.

Example: “Toni Morrison once wrote, ‘If there’s a book you want to read, but it hasn’t been written yet, then you must write it.’”

- **Bibliographic & Context:** Author, title, year, genre, and relevance.

Example: “Morrison’s 1987 novel *Beloved* confronts the haunting legacy of slavery through the story of Sethe, an escaped enslaved woman.”

- **Thesis:** Complex, multi-part argument.

Example: “Through fragmented narrative, symbolic depth, and psychological intensity, *Beloved* transcends historical fiction to become a meditation on memory, trauma, and love—though its nonlinear structure may challenge some readers.”

2. Summary (150–200 words)

Purpose: Provide context without oversimplifying.

Structure:

- **Paragraph 1:** Genre, setting, main characters, central conflict.

Example: “Set in post-Civil War Ohio, *Beloved* follows Sethe and her daughter Denver as they are haunted by the ghost of Sethe’s infant, Beloved. The novel moves between past and present, revealing Sethe’s escape from Sweet Home plantation and the traumatic choice she made to protect her children.”

- **Paragraph 2 (if needed):** Themes, narrative style, or key relationships.
- **Avoid:** Plot-by-plot retelling. Focus on what’s needed to understand the analysis.

3. Evaluation (4 paragraphs, 550–850 words total)

Each paragraph = 150–250 words, focusing on different literary elements.

Paragraph 1: Narrative Technique & Structure

Example: “Morrison’s use of nonlinear storytelling mirrors the fragmentation of traumatic memory. The shifting perspectives between Sethe, Denver, and Paul D create a mosaic of lived experience...”

Paragraph 2: Symbolism & Imagery

Example: “The figure of Beloved operates as both ghost and symbol—of the past, of guilt, and of unbearable love...”

Paragraph 3: Character Development

Example: “Sethe’s complexity lies in her dual nature as both victim and agent. Her decision to kill her child is presented not as monstrous but as an act of desperate protection...”

Paragraph 4: Weaknesses or Limitations

Example: “While the novel’s ambiguity is intentional, some readers may find the ending unresolved. Beloved’s disappearance feels abrupt, leaving certain emotional threads dangling...”

4. Recommendation (100–125 words)

Purpose: Position the book within literary and readerly contexts.

Structure:

- Overall assessment
- Target audience (specific)
- Literary comparisons
- Who might not appreciate it

Example:

“*Beloved* is essential reading for students of American literature, history, and trauma studies. Readers of Faulkner or Woolf will appreciate its modernist techniques. Those preferring linear plots may struggle, but its emotional and intellectual rewards are profound. Highly recommended for mature high school and college audiences.”

5. Conclusion (100–125 words)

Purpose: Synthesize analysis and underscore significance.

Structure:

- Restate thesis in evolved form
- Summarize key insights
- End with broader implication

Example:

“Ultimately, *Beloved* is not just a story about slavery—it is a testament to how history inhabits the present. Morrison’s mastery of language and form creates a reading experience that is as challenging as it is unforgettable, securing the novel’s place in the literary canon.”

Formatting for High School

- **Font:** Times New Roman 12pt
- **Spacing:** Double-spaced
- **Margins:** 1 inch
- **Header:** MLA style (name, instructor, course, date)
- **Title:** Centered, title case
- **Page Numbers:** Last name + page number (top right)
- **Citations:** MLA in-text (Author Page)
- **Works Cited:** Separate page
- **Word Count:** 800–1,200 words

Advanced Skills Emphasized

- Thematic analysis
- Literary device identification
- Engaging with critical perspectives (optional)
- Synthesizing evidence into argument
- Maintaining formal academic voice