

ENGL 1301 Spring 17 Final Essay Description

This is a discussion of a novel, with a research component. Below, I will explain the essay prompt. Please respond to that prompt. Your essay must take a definite position, which must be stated in a clear thesis statement that includes both the position and the reason for taking that position. The essay should explain and argue for your position on the issue.

THE PROMPT:

Read the epigraph to *Cat's Cradle*. What does Vonnegut mean by this -- what is his main message or thesis in writing this novel? Do you agree or disagree with what he is saying? Argue that you think he is either right or wrong, using your interpretation of what is in the book to support your argument.

The essay has a 900-word minimum length. It **must** include a Works Cited page, and citations **must** be in MLA format. An example of a Works Cited page is posted on Eagle Online and many resources to help with MLA citations are also posted there. The Works Cited page should be a separate page following the end of the main essay. **The Works Cited page must contain all sources that appear in the essay, and should not contain any sources that do not appear in the essay.** Your “primary source” will be *Cat's Cradle* and your “secondary source” will be your outside research. You can use more than one outside source but all must be cited and appear on the Works Cited page.

The essay must contain at least one appropriate research source. The source material must be relevant (see below) to your material and help explain or support what you are saying; must be incorporated properly so that the purpose of using the sources is clear; and must be cited properly within the text.

RESEARCH USE:

- It must be clear how the research material you use helps explain or support what you are saying in some way that is useful or necessary. That means you must tell us what it means and why it is important. The research source can be used to support or explain your interpretation of what the book is saying or what it means, or it can be used to support to explain your position and why you take that position on the prompt. For example: if you think Vonnegut used many very short chapters in order to create a certain important effect, maybe you can find a research source where a literary critic agrees with what you think.
- Do not use research sources or quotes to state commonly known or inarguable facts.

- Do not use quotes that come from Wikiquote or any other “quotation-aggregator.” If you use a quote from anyone, you must know what they meant when they said it, and your source citation must be either the actual original source or another reputable/meaningful source that used it.
- Dictionary definitions, encyclopedia entries, and Wikipedia entries do not count as research and should never be cited “School-note” sites such as Schmoop, SparkNotes, etc. cannot be used or cited as research. Free-essay sites such as 123helpme also cannot be used and should never be part of your essay in any way. Do not use as a source any previous student essay written for my class on this topic. Do not use any “answers” site such as Quora or Yahoo Answers as a source.
- You may use magazines, newspapers, books, blogs, podcasts, or videos that are authoritative and relevant to your topic. Be aware of when you are using factual information, analysis, or opinion. Do not include any source material or quotes without making clear to the reader what they are supposed to tell us.
- The Works Cited page does not count toward the essay length minimum. (Do your word-count check with the Works Cited page removed.)
- The essay must be proofread and finished appropriately for a final essay in this class level.

Everything I am asking you to do is within your capabilities. If you don’t understand what something means, **ask**, or **look somewhere else** for a simpler explanation. That is one of the most important parts of the skill set you are developing and which you will need hereafter.