

THE THESIS SENTENCE: An Examination

Part One: Underline the thesis components in the following sentences. In the left margin, label the number of components promised by each thesis.

- ___ 1. In developing the major contrast between myth, dream, vision, and heroism, on the one hand, and the reality of contemporary urban life on the other hand, Philip Booth uses numerous verbal devices ironically in the poem "Cold-Water Flat."
- ___ 2. "Loveliest of Trees" and "On Wenlock Edge" show A. E. Housman's preoccupation with the transience of human life, the ephemeral qualities of its pleasures, and an awareness of its pain.
- ___ 3. By using Huckleberry Finn as narrator, Mark Twain emphasizes the ironic contrast between innocent appearance and harsh reality.
- ___ 4. The humor in James Thurber's narrative, "The Night the Bed Fell," grows out of exaggerating the peculiar characteristics of his family.
- ___ 5. Sylvia Townsend Warner directs her satire, "The Phoenix," against people who exploit nature for personal gain and against an insensitive public that prefers violence and sensationalism to beauty and dignity.
- ___ 6. The speaker in Frost's "Mending Wall" is a mature, thoughtful man who has learned to accept and live with the shortcomings of others.
- ___ 7. Although both title characters are studies of failed lives, Edwin Arlington Robinson presents them with a difference: his view of Miniver Cheevy is consistently ironic and mocking, while his view of Eben Flood blends pathos with humor.
- ___ 8. In "Solitaire" Amy Lowell uses the speaker, sound devices, imagery, and figurative language to present the playful, joyous vision of a mind that explores far-off places while ordinary people sleep.
- ___ 9. The dominant literary element of "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" is the plot, but all the elements work together to create the total effect of the piece -- suspense about the fate of Peyton Farquhar, whose "escape" proves to be a mere illusion.
- ___ 10. Lorraine Hansberry's *Raisin in the Sun* exposes a deep-seated prejudice that is partially overcome through a combination of humor, grace, and strength.
- ___ 11. Robert Frost in "Fire and Ice" and Archibald MacLeish in "The End of the World," address themselves to a horrifying subject -- the physical destruction of our world. Although the poems present quite different visions of the end, both temper their terrifying visions with a tone of grim irony.
- ___ 12. Although Laura, the chief character in Katherine Anne Porter's "Flowering Judas," is portrayed as cold and indifferent to the people involved in the Mexican revolution, she is, ironically, alive with a painful consciousness of guilt.
- ___ 13. Although "The Pit and the Pendulum" is a short story and "Annabel Lee" and "The Raven" are poems, the use of certain sound devices, a subtle similarity of mood, and a fascination with the supernatural mark all three selections as the work of the same writer.
- ___ 14. In Maupassant's "The Necklace," Mathilde's appeal results from her hard work, strong character, and sad fate.
- ___ 15. Walter Van Tilburg Clark selects a vast, darkening sea as his setting to contrast conventional everyday living with an individualistic life style.

- ___ 16. As Charlie, the main character in *Flowers for Algernon*, becomes more intelligent, he finds himself becoming more isolated from other people.
- ___ 17. In "A White Heron," Sylvia's decision to conceal the location of the heron's nest reveals her respect for nature, her strength of character, and her independence.
- ___ 18. Chee in "Chee's Daughter" and Mehetabel in "The Bedquilt" are two determined individuals driven to achieve difficult goals who are changed by their efforts to realize their dreams.
- ___ 19. With situational and dramatic irony, "Her First Ball" by Katherine Mansfield presents the experiences of a young, naive country girl to illustrate the idea that young people cannot fully appreciate how fleeting life and youth are.
- ___ 20. In "Haircut," the essential meaning is conveyed to the reader by Lardner's consistent use of irony: that associated with the barber's self-revelations, and that stemming from the climactic event in his rambling account, the death of Jim.
- ___ 21. In "The Open Boat," Stephen Crane renders his admiration and scorn through his description of the men, his commentary on the situation in the boat, and his irony.
- ___ 22. Although "The Wind" by James Stephens and "The Wind Tapped like a Tired Man" by Emily Dickinson describe different aspects of the wind, both convey the special character of the wind through personification.
- ___ 23. Sylvia in "A White Heron" and Jan in "Without Words" both give up one thing in order to preserve something they consider more valuable.
- ___ 24. In Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado," pride motivates the actions and causes the downfall of Fortunato and Montresor.
- ___ 25. Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* reveals how pride causes the downfall of not only Julius Caesar, but also Cassius and Brutus.

Part Two: Each of the following theses is flawed in some way. Identify the flaw in each OR fix the flaw to the best of your ability.

1. In *Of Mice and Men*, foreshadowing builds drama by accumulating events and warnings that build inevitably toward the tragic ending. The most important of these ominous warnings are the execution of Candy's dog and the accidental death of Lennie's puppy.
2. In each of these tales, the hero or heroine is an extraordinary individual who possesses some or all of these characteristics: strength, courage, intelligence, and magic powers.
3. Shane is a noble, heroic figure who cannot overcome some tragedy in his past.

Part Three: In the space below, write three original theses about any movie(s) you choose.

1.

2.

3.