

# AP Language Paper #1 - Dressler Motifs Essay



## Purpose of Essay:

This essay serves three purposes:

1. To analyze the use of motifs in literature.
2. To draw conclusions about these motifs.
3. To use your understanding of Modernism in analyzing.

## Definition of Terms/Keys for Success:

AP exams love to see you draw conclusions, so they expect you to read carefully. Besides AP, colleges (be it English or Engineering) want to see you look into a written work and report back more than the basic details of a work. In contrast to an **Expository**, which requires a topical examination of a work, this **Form Essay** examines the elements of a story and explains how an author uses these elements to construct the plot as a whole.

In order to write a cohesive essay, you will need to focus/re-focus on some important elements:

### 1) Supporting Details

- a. You will need more than one citation to prove your topic sentence (if your topic sentence deals with color, for instance, you will need two to three supporting details from the work)
- b. You should tie each supporting details to a larger, interpretive concept (historical, literary device, author's purpose, etc):

Ex:

When Millhauser uses the color black, he shows . . . which ties \_\_\_\_\_ to the idea of . . .

### 2) Citations

- a. This is vitally important!

**Direct Citations** use a long quotation as the focus of the sentence (set off by a colon or a comma - generally at the end of the sentence). All direct quotations need a context, commentary, citation:

On page 66, when Martin first meets the Vernon family, he's struck by an immediate contrast that, "...".

OR -

**Implicit Citations** relays a specific idea, includes a short quotation, and ends with a citation.

Martin notices "... " almost immediately; their "... " creates ... as they both show ... (Dressler, 66).

**Embedded Citations** summarize a specific scene without quotations, but end with citation. (This is your most effective method because it shows mastery of the details - ie, you are not using quotes to prove your points, you are using specifics from the story)

Chapter 4 elaborates on Martin's struggle between ... which shows the tension how the Modern period corrupted people's hopes and dreams (Dressler, 44-51)

**The Assignment:**

Below is a prompt fashioned in the AP Literature Format - Prose Question. Before we begin, hi-light the important elements of this cue. Though this is not an exact replication - the exact question will ask you to develop an argument—, you should be mindful of three writing techniques absolutely necessary for success:

- 1) Embedded and Indirect Citations
- 2) Summarization/Context that accompanies quotations
- 3) Arguing requires text:
  - a. Tell what the author says
  - b. Tell why he says it (or the impact on the story)

**Prompt**

Motifs in literature can be subtle, but authors use them to develop a comprehensive picture out of the smaller pieces of the story. Using Martin Dressler: Tale of an American Dreamer, discuss how the author uses motifs and how they contribute to the novel as a whole.