

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Ms. Wu  
AP Literature  
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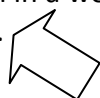
## Writing Thesis Statements

### Thesis

The structure of an AP Literature timed write thesis is the same across all prompts.

- 1) Explicitly name the literary work and author
- 2) Give brief summary and context for work
- 3) Answer all parts of the prompt in a succinct, precise, and synthesized statement of key ideas.  
What you put here serves as a thematic focus for your body paragraphs.

Read the following passage. Then in a well-organized essay, **analyze** the **literary techniques** Gilman uses to **characterize** the **narrator**.



This prompt asks you to synthesize two components:

- 1) How literary techniques
- 2) Construct character

Therefore, your thesis must offer an analytical statement that answers the prompt clearly.

### Student Example #1

In this passage from “The Yellow Wallpaper,” Charlotte Perkins Gilman depicts a housewife’s struggle out of her oppression. Through the use of personification, understatement, and juxtaposition, Gilman captures the narrator’s slow descent into insanity as she loses her grasp on reality.

### Strengths

- Concise. Every word counts.
- “Housewife’s struggle out of her oppression” gives context for character and conflict
- Lists core literary devices body paragraphs will examine
- Strong active verb: “captures”
- “slow descent into insanity as she loses her grasp on reality”: synthesizes narrator’s characterization into a concise statement of what the passage depicts

### Questions and Things to Consider

- Are personification, understatement, and juxtaposition the most important literary devices? Can they anchor the entire analysis? Do they most clearly create character?
- “Slow descent into insanity”: Writer has clearly taken a stand on the narrator’s characterization, and this is proficient. As written, the thesis leaves little nuance and place for uncertainty, however. How can the writer revise this thesis to allow room for

where the text leaves matters uncertain, irony, and paradox? Integrating this into the thesis concisely will push the thesis into an advanced level of argumentation.

Final Recommendation:	Keep sentence 1. Revise sentence 2. Revise = rewrite.
Thesis Argumentation Level:	Proficient
Thesis Use of Academic Language:	Advanced (excellent use of A.L. and concision)

#### Student Example #2

In this passage from “The Yellow Wallpaper,” Charlotte Perkins Gilman develops an eerie atmosphere to illustrate how the narrator slowly goes mad while being kept in a room. She locks herself in and throws the key out the window as she rips off the wallpaper from the wall. Eventually, her mental faculties erode to the point that she sees women creeping behind the wallpaper, and then she believes that she is one of those women. Through the use of animalistic imagery, manipulated pace, differing diction styles, and exclamation points, Gilman creates the image of a woman who has off-putting thoughts and actions, but is also capable of seeming stable when necessary.

#### Strengths

- Literary device selection
- Alludes to complexity of the narrator; hints at paradox: “Gilman creates the image of a woman who has off-putting thoughts and actions, but is also capable of seeing stable when necessary.” (Needs to be reworded more precisely, but very good idea!)
- Strong active verb
- Context

#### Questions and Things to Consider

- Thesis is too long. Cut context. Write more concisely.
- Synthesize literary devices into larger umbrella ones: figurative language, diction, syntax, etc.
- Revise language. Need more precise academic words and transitions.
- Ideas actually reveal more advanced thinking, but composition prevents it from reaching that level.

Final Recommendation:	Keep your root ideas, but revise the entire thesis.
Thesis Argumentation Level:	Proficient
Thesis Use of Academic Language:	Proficient Minus

Thesis Revision: The following thesis reflects the best of both thesis samples. It attempts to synthesize them into one coherent statement.

In this passage from “The Yellow Wallpaper,” Charlotte Perkins Gilman depicts a housewife’s struggle out of oppression. Through the use of figurative language and interior monologue, Gilman captures the narrator’s slow descent into madness and the division she experiences as a woman who not only loses her grip on reality but paradoxically also knows—even welcomes—it.

## Integrating Quotes into Your Analysis

### Principles

- Start with the concrete quote→ Then provide commentary. You must have actual quotes.
- Provide short, concise context for quote. What is happening in the text?
- Never, never, never let a quote stand alone in a sentence. **Always transition in and out of quotes.**
- Chunk the most important parts of quotes and integrate them into your commentary.
- Synthesize different chunks of quotes into one sentence. The combination of quotes you choose reflects your level of critical thinking and deftness as a writer.

Example: Observe how the quotes are integrated. Observe the structure of each paragraph.

In this passage from “The Yellow Wallpaper,” Charlotte Perkins Gilman depicts a housewife’s struggle out of oppression. Through the use of figurative language and interior monologue, Gilman captures the narrator’s slow descent into madness and the division she experiences as a woman who not only loses her grip on reality but paradoxically knows—even welcomes—it.

Gilman first offers a glimpse of the narrator’s deteriorating mental state through her use of interior monologue. We are privy to the narrator’s thoughts and feelings. Short, choppy exclamatory sentences like “How those children did tear about here! This bedstead is fairly gnawed!” mirror the heightened tempo of the narrator’s thoughts (655). Her mind is racing. Her observations call into question her objectivity: who indeed gnawed the bedstead? The children or the narrator herself? Precisely through the narrator’s observations, Gilman creates a dramatic irony between what the narrator believes and what her readers interpret as real.

But we cannot discredit the narrator just yet. She offers cogent statements that suggest that she knows exactly what she is doing—and why. When she declares, “But I must get to work. I have locked the door and thrown the key down into the front path,” the narrator explains that she is waiting for John so that she can “astonish him” (655). The succession of multiple “I” statements—“I must...I have locked...I don’t want...I want”—reflect the narrator’s determination and logic in seeing her plan fulfilled (655). And the narrator’s reasons make sense at some level. She wants to “astonish” John with sudden wonder and fear so that he can finally see her not on his terms, but hers. While the narrator’s locking herself in the room and throwing away the key seems unreasonable, even “mad” to the outside world, it is justified because...