

Final Project, Option 2
Anthology Introduction

Due: May 5, 2014

For this Final Project option, you will select five scenes from the plays we've read in class and write a 5-7 page introduction for a collection of "Shakespeare's Greatest Scenes" a (hypothetical) book to be published by Longman designed for use by high school and college students as well as general (i.e., non-academic) readers of Shakespeare, *all of whom are already familiar with the plots of the plays*. These readers are looking to you for a clear and cogent introduction that draws on and synthesizes important scholarly voices. **You must tell me by April 23rd that you are choosing this paper option.** If you do not, your grade will automatically drop one letter grade.

Choose your scenes: The first challenge in writing this essay is the selection of scenes, which is entirely at your discretion. Feel free to choose any five scenes you wish. Think seriously about the rationale of your choice: what do the scenes have in common? Do they all address a common subject or theme (e.g., gender or violence or some poetic or dramatic quality)? Do they all contain a specific kind of character or dramatic event? Do they all contain a certain formal quality, such as a peculiar use of prose and verse? What is the standard of "greatness" on which you choose them? It doesn't matter which ones you choose as long as you're clear on *why* you've chosen them.

Scholarship: Another challenge is to distill and utilize for your non-academic audience various scholarly approaches to or readings of the scenes. **You must draw on and cite at least three peer-reviewed scholarly sources.** (For more on how to gather these sources, see the Option 1 assignment sheet.) You should not simply regurgitate the claims and evidence of those sources, but use them to introduce your audience to the scenes. For example, when discussing Henry's Crispin's Day speech, don't simply recapitulate, say, Norman Rabkin's reading of the scene; instead, place his reading in a nexus of possible ways to understand what happens in the scene. At the same time, don't rely exclusively on those sources for the essay: this is your paper, and your voice must be the strongest.

Style: Use David Bevington's introductions to get a sense of how your introduction should sound. Remember that your goal is not to tell the reader what happens but to offer a sophisticated and helpful introductory treatment of the selected scenes. Thus, if you've chosen scenes that have a certain theme or criterion of "greatness," your introduction should focus on that theme, which the thesis of your introduction will address and encapsulate. Your thesis should answer the question, "Why these five scenes?" Remember to ground your discussion in close analysis of textual evidence and of secondary sources.

Think about your reader: Beyond these parameters, you are free to organize the introduction however you like. This independence is the final major challenge of this assignment, for you must *think seriously about the needs of your reader*. Is it best to address one scene at a time or in groups? How might you use scholarship on one scene to inform how we look at another scene? What does your introduction seek to offer your reader as s/he looks ahead to the scenes in the book? It will be clear that you've thought seriously about the reader of your introduction. **Do not overlook this aspect of the assignment.** The difference between an "A" and a "C" paper usually has to do with how the paper speaks to the rhetorical situation.

A very successful introduction will:

- be properly formatted
- be free of grammatical errors and stylistic unclarity
- address the central questions of the assignment clearly and cogently
- have a strong, clear thesis that unifies the paper into a single, strong claim
- be thoughtfully organized into a paragraph structure that most persuasively articulates the paper's argument
- have paragraphs that contain discernible topics, transitions, and a cogent structure
- marshal appropriate evidence and analysis to advance the thesis
- cite all sources appropriately
- speaks thoughtfully and clearly in the specified rhetorical situation.

Format: the introduction should be between 5-7 pages long and should follow MLA formatting guidelines. If you are not familiar with MLA formatting, see me. A list of the selected scenes should precede the introduction, and a Works Cited or Bibliography should follow it. You may include pictures, but these will not count toward the paper length requirement. Late papers will not be accepted. **Do not hesitate to contact me with questions or problems—especially in the early stages of writing, when you are choosing and researching a topic. Past students have described paper consultations with me as "mind-blowing," "like landing on the surface of the sun," and "encouraging."**