

## ESSAY 3

### RESEARCH PAPER

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Write a 1,700–2,000 word (7–8 page) essay on *Macbeth* that presents new and surprising information to your reader. You must support the analysis in your essay with both your own careful close reading of the text and with secondary sources. Your essay should employ a Surprising Reversal structure.

Since *Macbeth* as a whole is too mammoth a topic to cover in a brief essay, you will need to limit the scope of your paper. The best way to focus your essay is to look at a single scene—or part of a scene—from *Macbeth*. That should help keep your essay within manageable limits.

#### Sources

For this essay, you will have **one** primary source (the text of *Macbeth*) and at least **four** secondary sources all documented in proper MLA format. Your secondary sources might include critical essays or books on *Macbeth*, Shakespeare's own sources (like *Holinshed's Chronicles*), cultural and historical backgrounds, stage history—including filmed versions of the play, or anything else that might help support your analysis.

The essay must have a Works Cited page with full bibliographic information on your sources and employ in-text citations and parenthetical references. Use proper MLA style for formatting your document.

See [drmarkwomack.com/mla-style/](http://drmarkwomack.com/mla-style/): “Document Format,” “Anatomy of a Citation,” “How to Quote Shakespeare,” and “Documenting Sources.”

#### Surprising Reversal

A Surprising Reversal essay first presents a common answer to a question, then presents the writer's new, surprising view on that question.

Before you start drafting your essay, make sure you can answer each of the following questions:

1. What question does your essay address?
2. What is the common, expected, or popular answer to this question that your audience holds?
3. What examples and details support your audience's view?
4. What is your own surprising view?
5. What examples and details support this view? Why do you hold this view? Why should a reader believe you?

#### Thesis

Rather than appearing at the end of the introduction, the thesis in a Surprising Reversal essay appears after the writer has summarized the common view. A Surprising Reversal thesis will generally take this form:

“Although many people believe X (*common* view), I am going to show you Y (new, *surprising* view).”

Here are some examples of Surprising-Reversal thesis statements:

- Although most people believe Native Americans lived in harmony with nature, many Native American tribes altered their environment aggressively, burning down forests to make farming easier and hunting some animals to the edge of extinction.
- To most audiences, *The Bride of Frankenstein* is a monster movie about science run amok, yet many in the gay community interpret the film as an allegory about homosexual identity.

**Structure**

Your introduction should arouse the reader’s curiosity by posing an interesting question. The next section should first summarize a common or expected answer to the question, then present your thesis—your surprising answer to the question. Then, in the rest of your paper, provide new, surprising information that reverses or modifies the common view. (Imagine readers who hold a mistaken or overly narrow view of your topic; your purpose is to give them a new, surprising view.) In your conclusion, summarize your main points and clearly present the significance of your new perspective. Make sure every paragraph has a clear topic sentence.

STRUCTURE OF A SURPRISING REVERSAL ESSAY

<b>Introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engage the reader’s interest in your question.</li><li>• Provide background and context if necessary.</li></ul>
<b>Common View</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Present the common or popular answer to your question.</li><li>• Provide a delayed <b>thesis</b>—your surprising answer to the question.</li></ul>
<b>Surprising View</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop and support the thesis with information from your own textual analysis and from your research.</li></ul>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make final comments about the significance of your new perspective on the critical question.</li></ul>

**Style**

Make your prose as clear and concise as possible. Don’t waste your time (or mine!) trying to sound impressive. Write, instead, in a conversational voice: the clear, plainspoken, engaging voice of a person talking about a subject they find interesting. Make every word count.

### **Drafts**

I encourage you to write a rotten first draft of your essay as soon as possible and use it to help you build a better paper. You do not have to submit a rough draft to me, but if you want me to read and respond to your work in progress, I will gladly do so. You can send your work in progress to me as an email attachment or give me a hard copy of it in class. You may submit your work in progress for my feedback anytime before the Draft Deadline: Friday, November 18.

### **Proofreading**

Before you submit your essay for a grade, proofread it carefully and thoroughly, correcting any errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and MLA formatting. Slapdash spelling, sloppy punctuation, semiliterate grammar, or slipshod MLA formatting seriously undermines your credibility as a writer.

*Therefore, essays with excessive errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, or MLA formatting will receive no higher than a D.*

### **Evaluation**

In evaluating your essay, I will focus on the originality and insightfulness of your thesis, the precision of your analysis, and the clarity of your prose. (See the “Grading Criteria for Major Essays” on the Syllabus.)

Submit your essay through the TurnItIn link on the class Blackboard page labeled “Essay 3: Research Paper.”

### **DUE DATES:**

- **DRAFT DEADLINE: November 18**
- **FINAL DRAFT DUE: December 2\***

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\* I hereby grant to anyone who wants it a one week extension on the paper. Note, however, that late papers get no written comments from me and that I won't accept any papers submitted later than one week past the due date: December 9.