

Name: _____

Pd: _____

Date: _____

Essay Questions for Realism

We will each be writing a **3 page** essay on one of the two short stories we read for our Realism unit: “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” by Ambrose Bierce, or “The Yellow Wall-Paper” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman.

1. In “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge,” Peyton Farquhar’s dream of escape is filled with details that hint at his actual fate. Identify and analyze examples of this foreshadowing.
2. Analyze “The Yellow Wall-Paper” through a feminist lens. Consider some of the following questions to address:
 - a. What statement is Charlotte Perkins Gilman making about gender roles or relationships between men and women?
 - b. Who (or what) is to blame for the narrator’s madness?
 - c. How does the use of first-person perspective give the narrator agency and ownership over her own story?
 - d. How could the story be read as a criticism of patriarchal society?
3. What does “To Start a Fire” say about humans and their relationship with nature?
4. Explain how **any of the 3 texts** embodies the key ideas of realist fiction. Some examples of characteristics of realism include:
 - Objective, unbiased representation of the real lives of people
 - Engagement with social issues, making social criticism
 - Interest in human behavior and psychology

Some tips for your thesis statement:

- Your thesis must contain a CLAIM that is an **arguable** or **debatable** statement (someone could disagree with it, but you intend to prove it).
- Your thesis should include your **reasoning** that will prove your statement (this should refer to the evidence you intend to use)

Sample thesis starters:

1. Ambrose Bierce uses foreshadowing in “Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” by...
2. “Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” is a realist text because it...
3. In “The Yellow Wall-Paper,” Charlotte Perkins Gilman criticizes...

REMINDER: This essay is a major grade for the 4th Marking Period. I am available for writing help every Thursday in room 209 from 3-4, and by appointment at other times.

My CLAIM (eg. In “The Yellow Wall-Paper,” Charlotte Perkins Gilman criticizes...):

NEXT, gather your **evidence**. Find AT LEAST 4 quotes from your story that support your claim:

QUOTE 1	QUOTE 2
This proves my CLAIM because...	This proves my CLAIM because...
QUOTE 3	QUOTE 4
This proves my CLAIM because...	This proves my CLAIM because...

WORKING THESIS

Combine your **CLAIM** with a brief summary of your **EVIDENCE** to get your working thesis:
