

AP English IV Essay 1: Mind Torn Asunder

Prompt

The eighteenth-century British novelist Laurence Stern wrote, “nobody, but he who has felt it, can conceive what a plaguing thing it is to have a man’s mind torn asunder by two projects of equal strength, both obstinately pulling in a contrary direction at the same time.”

From a novel or play choose a character (not necessarily the protagonist) whose mind is pulled in conflicting directions by two compelling desires, ambitions, obligations, or influences. Then, in a well-organized essay, identify each of the two conflicting forces and explain how this conflict within one character illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole. (Try to ignore the sexism in the prompt, if you can!)

Comment [d1]: A bit of a distraction. This is common on the AP prompts. While the quotation may help clarify your understanding of the prompt it, just as often, adds little information.

Comment [d2]: Follow this requirement carefully. No short stories, epics, etc.

Comment [d3]: Two critical parts to this prompt, both of which must be addressed in your response: the two sides of the conflict **and** how that conflict illustrates the theme of the work.

Requirements

- Please submit a typed response that uses a legible 10 point font, 1” margins, a double spaced body, and a simple single spaced header.
- Your response should include both an introduction and conclusion, both of which should be short and direct.
- A good goal would be 1 ½-2 pages.

Some Novels and Plays to Consider

To Kill a Mockingbird
The Grapes of Wrath
The Scarlet Letter
The Things They Carried

For Whom the Bell Tolls
Pride and Prejudice
Romeo and Juliet
Julius Caesar

