

ENG 106
Serializing Fiction
Dr. Adam Abraham
Spring 2024 (Block 6)

CLOSE READING

First Draft DUE: Thursday 22 February

Final Draft DUE: Friday 23 February by 4:30 pm
Attach a file and email to aabraham@cornellcollege.edu
In the subject line write "CLOSE READING"

This is not an essay. This is an exercise—an exercise in writing paragraphs. Write two, three, or four paragraphs. You do not need an introduction and a conclusion. Choose one passage in *Oliver Twist*: maybe a few paragraphs, no more than one page. Choose a passage that you find intriguing, challenging, and/or strange. (Do not choose p. 3.)

STEP 1. Produce a close reading. What is striking, significant, or curious about the passage that you chose? It will be helpful to move beyond story and character. Instead, notice the style. How does the passage operate? Who speaks? What kind of voice is it? Is it straightforward, ironic, detached? What type of sentences are used? What is the diction like? Is there repetition? Do you notice imagery? Any literary techniques? Be specific. Quote directly from the passage (with quotation marks) at least once to provide evidence for your close reading. Write one or two paragraphs.

STEP 2. Remember synecdoche: the relationship between the part and the whole. How does this connect to *Oliver Twist*? The novel appeared in *Bentley's Miscellany*, in twenty-four parts, over more than two years. Identify the relationship between the passage that you chose and the entirety of the novel (that you have read so far). How does this passage fit? Does it create suspense? Offer comic relief? Information? Which characters, locations, and moods are represented? Write or one two paragraphs.

Imagine that your audience is your fellow class members. They have read the book; they do not need to hear the plot. Further, do not write a "book review." Avoid judgment: "clever," "well-written," "genius," "boring," "I like," "I don't like," "the worst."

REQUIREMENTS

- Use a normal, 12-point font, with serifs, such as Times or Times New Roman.
- Double-space EVERY LINE. Double-space is not single-space or space-and-one-half.
- Write in multiple paragraphs. Indent each new paragraph. Do not skip lines.
- Follow the conventions of edited American English unless there is a good reason not to. When in doubt, consult *The Chicago Manual of Style*.
- Maximum length = 1,000 words.
- Meet with the instructor for a thirty-minute conference on Zoom. A sign-in sheet is available (adamabraham.info). Send first draft to aabraham@cornellcollege.edu before your conference begins. If you miss your conference, you lose 5 points.
- If you need to reschedule your conference, send an email before the conference begins.
- In the upper-left corner of the FIRST PAGE, include the following information:

Your Name

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Date

Close Reading

- One line below that, centered, write the book and chapter numbers, the page number(s), and two or three words to identify the passage. Thus:

Book 1, chap. 1, p. 3. Mudfog Workhouse

Book 1, chap. 8, pp. 57–58. Walking to London

Book 2, chap. 1, p. 192. Bumble's Merry Dance

GRADING

- Final drafts will be scored in two areas: content and expression. *Expression* refers to English grammar, spelling, punctuation, and the specifications on this document.
- Each essay will get a score from 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest) in each area.
- If you want more guidance, feel free to discuss in class or email for an appointment.