

“The Seafarer” & Guidelines for Constructed Response Prompts

- A. Read through the question/prompt carefully, and highlight the specific things that it tells you to look for and do.
- B. Read the given passage carefully.
 1. On your first reading, do not take notes; focus on simply understanding the passage on a literal level (reading comprehension): What is the passage about?
 2. On your second reading, start annotating. Write on the passage and take notes focused on the elements in the prompt.
- C. Once you have finished your notes, state your claim. Turn the prompt question into an answer.

Sample Prompt: Analyze the given poem and identify the **speaker’s tone** through the writer’s **use of language***. **Whenever you see a phrase like **use of language**, think **any literary device**, like imagery, figurative language (metaphors, similes, etc.), diction, etc.*

(Bad Thesis): The writer uses language to reveal the speaker’s tone.

Claim (Good Thesis/Argument): The speaker’s use of diction and choices of image and metaphor clearly reveal a bitter tone.

“The Seafarer” Prompt: Read the poem carefully and identify from which literary period it comes. Support your claim by discussing specific conventions (use of literary devices, themes, philosophies, values) evident in the poem. Quote specific passages to prove each convention you identify.

Your Claim:

- D. Make a plan!
 1. Jot down the main points that you will use to prove your thesis (leave space between them).
 2. Under each main point, note the specific details you will use to develop/prove it.
 3. Consider the order of main points—the best arguments often end with the strongest point.
- E. Start writing.
 1. Do not waste time formulating an involved introductory paragraph! Get right to the point (your thesis) and focus on developing (fully supporting/proving) it in the body of your essay.
 2. For each body paragraph:
 - a. State each point clearly and concisely in the topic sentence.
 - b. Develop each point with specific details and that support it—more than two.
 - c. Wrap up each point and make a transition to your next main point—connecting both points to the thesis.

Grammar/Mechanics Rules:

1. Use 3rd person pronouns only (no 1st or 2nd—this essay is not about you or me; focus on the work itself!)
2. Write in the “literary present”—when writing about literature, always use present tense.
3. Use active voice.
4. Vary the way your sentences begin; also vary sentence length and structure—all about style and that extra point!