Essay Questions - Prose Fiction  
A.  
1. Choose a novel or a short story or a work of non-fiction which explores an  
important theme.  
By referring to appropriate techniques, show how the author has explored this  
theme.  
2. Choose a novel or a short story in which the author creates a fascinating  
character.  
By referring to appropriate techniques, show how the author has created this  
character and why you found him/her so fascinating  
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B.  
1. Choose a novel or short story in which you feel sympathy with one of the main  
characters because of the difficulties or injustice or hardships she or he has to  
face.  
Describe the problems the character faces and, by referring to appropriate  
techniques, show how you are made to feel sympathy for her or him.  
2. Choose a novel or short story or a work of non-fiction in which the writer uses  
a memorable style/voice/narrative technique.  
By referring to appropriate techniques, explain in detail how features of the  
writing style/voice/narrative technique contribute to the effectiveness of the  
text.  
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C.  
1. Choose a novel or short story with an ending which you find satisfactory.  
By referring to appropriate techniques, explain why you find the ending  
satisfactory in bringing to a conclusion the main concerns of the text as a  
whole.  
2. Choose a novel or short story or a work of non-fiction which deals with an  
important human issue (such as the abuse of power, conflict between good  
and evil, loss of freedom or hatred between individuals or groups).  
By referring to appropriate techniques, show how the author reveals the issue  
through the portrayal of people and events throughout the text, and show how  
your understanding of the issue has deepened.  
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D.  
1. Choose a novel or short story in which a character is in conflict with his or her  
friends or relatives or society.  
By referring to appropriate techniques, show how the conflict arises and what  
effect it has on the character’s fate in the novel or short story as a whole.  
2. Choose a novel or short story or a work of non-fiction in which setting is an  
important feature.  
By referring to appropriate techniques, explain how the writer creates the  
setting, and then go on to show how this feature contributes to your  
understanding of the text as a whole.

E.  
1. Choose a novel or short story in which setting in time and/or place is an  
important feature.  
By referring to appropriate techniques, show how the author has portrayed  
this setting and how this influenced your response to the text.  
2. Choose a novel or short story which presents a theme that is relevant to you.  
By referring to appropriate techniques, show how the author has explored this  
theme.  
F.  
1. Choose a novel or short story where an important character clearly shows  
development or change.  
By referring to appropriate techniques, show how the author has portrayed  
development and how this influenced your response to the text.  
2. Choose a novel or short story where you can identify a key moment, such as  
a turning point or climax.  
By referring to appropriate techniques, describe the key moment and then go  
on to discuss its importance to the text as a whole.  
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G.  
1. Choose a novel or short story that creates a mood or atmosphere effectively.  
By referring to appropriate techniques, show how the author has created this  
mood or atmosphere and how this influenced your response to the text.  
2. Choose a novel or short story that made you consider an aspect of human  
nature or human society.  
By referring to appropriate techniques, describe the aspect of human nature  
or human society and then go on to discuss its importance to the text as a  
whole.  
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2014  
1. Choose a novel or short story or work of non-fiction which has a key incident.  
Give a brief account of the incident, and by referring to appropriate  
techniques, show how this incident is important to the text as a whole.  
2. Choose a novel or short story in which there is a character involved in some  
form of conflict.  
By referring to appropriate techniques, show how the character comes to be  
involved in this conflict and how the conflict develops throughout the text.  
Critical Essay Resources – National 5 Critical Essay Questions on Prose  
2015  
1. Choose a novel or short story in which the writer creates a realistic or  
convincing character. By referring to appropriate techniques, show how the  
writer creates this character, and say why you find him or her to be realistic or  
convincing.  
2. Choose a novel or short story or work of non-fiction which explores a theme  
which you find interesting. By referring to appropriate techniques, show how the  
writer explores this theme.