

Sample essay questions

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



Sample Essay Questions 1. When a person undergoes the process of change, they leave a part of them behind. To what extent do you agree with this statement? Refer to your 2. Change is always accompanied by drawback and discomfort. Discuss this statement with close reference to your prescribed texts and one other related text of your own choosing. 3. The process of change involves learning from your mistakes and making an effort to become a better person. Evaluate this statement with reference to your prescribed texts and on other related text of your own choosing. 4. When a change of context is forced upon you, the individual needs to decide whether to embrace what is on offer or shun the opportunities available. To what extent do your texts and characters support this statement? Refer to your prescribed texts and a related text of your own choosing. Sample Question #1 ' When a person undergoes the process of change, they leave a part of them behind. To what extent do you agree with this statement? Refer to your prescribed texts and one other related text of your own choosing' Planning: - Memoirs of a Geisha: Chiyo leaves behind the life of a poor fisherman's daughter, along with her mother and sister, for the life of a Geisha - Things Fall Apart: Nwoye, Okonkwos weak son Nwoyea converts and submits to the missionaries or Okonkwo leaves behind is body, after he commits suicide — his major change was life to death - American History X — Derek's paradigm shift post rape and Dr. Sweeny conversation, as he leaves his racist and bigotry views behind, and in return attempts to change his younger brother Danny. ' there could be some truth in that statement, however ' therefore it is clear that whilst such and such would be more accurate such and such is...' Essay Change is to alter, to make different, to pass from one stage to

another. The film *Memoirs of a Geisha*, the novel *Things Fall Apart*, and the film *American History X*, all exhibit protagonists who embrace change and accept the inevitable sacrifices that accompany it, or fight change until their last moments. The protagonists being Chiyo from *Memoirs of a Geisha* who has no choice but to accept change, Okonkwo from *Things Fall Apart* who rejects change, and Derek from *American History X* who embraces change. Through a variety of cinematic and literary techniques such as film noir, monochromatic colouring and a range of camera shots, all three texts are able to portray the protagonists going through a process of change. *Things Fall Apart*, a novel written by Chinua Achebe, confronts the harsh realities of white missionaries in postcolonial Africa, with the focus on Umuofia clan leader Okonkwo, who has to deal with the changes the white missionaries bring. Unlike Chiyo or Derek, Okonkwo resists and rejects change till his death. In the final moments of the novel, Okonkwo commits his last acts of defiance,; the murder of the white messenger, and suicide. ' Okonkwos machetes descended twice and the mans head lay beside his uniformed body... they had broken into tulmult instead of action... why did he do it?'. Literary techniques such as imagery, the use of a rhetorical question and foreshadowing can be observed within this quote. Imagery allows the reader to get a sense of Okonkwos violent nature, whilst a rhetorical question gives an insight into the thoughts of the clansmen and how the clan excluding Okonkwo has rather accepted change, instead of resisting it. The techniques within the quote also assist the reader in visualising Okonkwos last act of insolence, as it foreshadows his eventual death. Regarding the question, yes Okonkwo does leave ' a part of himself behind', however he goes through no

process of change, as he spent the time between the landing of the missionaries and his death, repelling change. American History X, a film directed by Tony Kaye, is about a former neo-Nazi skinhead Derek Vineyard, who attempts to prevent his younger brother Danny, from going down the same path that he did. The film's protagonist, Derek, goes through a process of change, where in order for him to be completely reformed, he must leave his old way of life behind. Derek's turning point is depicted in a monochromatic flashback, displaying a chain of events whilst he is in prison; he befriends a black inmate named Lamont and is consequently set on by a gang of neo-Nazi's that sexually abuse him, and when his former high school teacher Sweeney pays a visit. 'That don't make sense. You don't get six years for stealing a TV.' This is a snippet of conversation between Derek and Lamont, where Derek is questioning why Lamont is serving such a lengthy sentence for a minor crime. Through dialogue, the viewer is able to witness Derek's intelligence regaining control, over his blind anger as he begins to question the discrimination towards black criminals. Post rape, Sweeney visits Derek as he heard about the incident. 'Has anything you've done made your life better?'. Sweeney gives Derek a new direction in life with this question, and an angled camera shot displays Derek's resentment for past actions. Derek replies with 'just help me', demonstrating that he regrets his past, and is determined to change. The final moments of the flashback illustrate how Derek has begun to change, as he has starts to regrow his hair, in defiance of the 'neo-Nazi skinhead' appearance. The flashback scene finishes, and Derek can be seen sitting with his younger brother Danny, as he tries to save Danny from the life in which Derek lead, the life that he has

now left behind, in order to change. *Memoirs of a Geisha*, a film directed by Rob Marshall, is about how a young Japanese girl transcended her poor fishing-village roots and became one of Japan's most celebrated geisha. The film's main character Chiyo is sold to an Okiya in Kyoto, and consequently has to leave the life of a poor fisherman's daughter behind. The opening scene depicts young Chiyo and her sister dramatically taken from their home. The scene is dark, and stormy, with long-range shots of an angry ocean. Techniques such as film noir and pathetic fallacy, demonstrate the volatile situation Chiyo is in at this moment, as well as reflect the mood of the scene. The camera quickly jumps to the young girls travelling through a wealthy Hanamachi region in Kyoto, on their way to an Okiya. The scene is fast and bright, with close up shots of the young girls miserable and gloomy faces. ' She told me I was like water, water can carve its way through stone and once trapped, water makes a new path'. This quote foreshadows Chiyo's adaptation to the life in an Okiya, and embracement of the life of a Geisha. The scene finishes as Chiyo is given a talk on the lay of the land by the head of the Geisha, and must now adjust to her new life, leaving her old life behind. Derek and Chiyo are ideal examples of acclimatization to change. Although both their processes of change occurred under different circumstances, they saw the need to adapt and forget in order to move forward. In another part of the world sat Okonkwo, who couldn't see past the ' evil colonizers' and their reforms, and saw his suicide — his final act of defiance - as heroic, rather than a final submission to the pressures of the colonizers. The films *Memoirs of a Geisha* and *American History X*, as well as the novel *Things Fall Apart* depict diverse circumstances of change, and the sacrifices that need to

be made, and the things that need to be left behind. ‘ There are things that we never want to let go of; people we never want to leave behind. But keep in that letting go isn’t the end of the world, it’s the beginning of a new life’.

Sample Question #3 ‘ Change is always accompanied by drawback and discomfort. Discuss this statement with close reference to your prescribed texts and one other related text of your own choosing.’ Planning: - *Memoirs of a Geisha*: Chiyo’s change is becoming a Geisha, and the drawback and discomfort with this change of course would be leaving her family behind, and the immense training a budding Geisha goes through (training montage, attempted escape scene) - *Things Fall Apart*: - *American History X*: For many years Derek grew up with a crowd of white supremacists, and it seems like they’re all he’s ever known, therefore coming out of jail, and adopting this new perception proves to be difficult and is unwelcome amongst his old crowd (scene #3 in notes) Intro Change is to alter, to make different, to pass from one stage to another. In the case of 2 texts, being *Things Fall Apart* and *American History X*, change is depicted as a process in which the drawbacks and discomforts outdo the positives; whilst another text being *Memoirs of A Geisha*, the want to change and the benefits that comes with it far outweigh the disadvantages. Through a variety of cinematic and literary techniques such as film noir, monochromatic colouring and a range of camera shots, all three texts are able portray protagonists Derek, Chiyo, and Okonkwo/Nwoye going through a process of change.