

# Sample essay on arts, literature and values

[Family](#), [Parents](#)



## **English 200E**

(A response to question number 3)

Arts and literature are parts of our cultural heritage that developed us to what we are now. They are parts of our history that give us identity and set us apart from others. By learning them, we get to expand our limited understanding of life and see into ourselves in a deeper sense. Thus, we get to understand ourselves and discover the values and principles that we live by through learning arts and literature.

As individuals different from each other, we have varying interpretations of emotions. While some people may find love as pure, magical and fragile, others may think of it as just another territory worth exploring. In a modern community where divorce is always an option, it seems that people's perception of love has drastically changed from being a lifetime commitment to a trial and error relationship that could easily end once it proved to be unsuccessful, then simply move on to another. This change in perception has influenced the way people make decisions about love, particularly in choosing the right person that one wants to be with. Today, instead of looking at love as a happy part of ones life, more and more people are starting to avoid it in fear of making the wrong decision. But love will continue to persist, as it has always had ever since the time of Romeo and Juliet. As such, we are still faced with the reality that we had to rely on our values that will guide us in making the right decision.

The more I ponder about arts and literature, the more I see its significance in the lives of the people. Arts and literature provide us with an opportunity to

see the lives of others and analyze them from an outsider's perspective. As with the love story of Romeo and Juliet, we are able to understand how a tragedy like dying is more preferable than living without the person that you love. It made me realize that in love, fear of death does not exist. It also highlighted the importance of family, how keeping an open mind and giving a daughter or a son the freedom to choose who to love can lead to a more harmonious family relationship.

Arts and literature also present people from all walks of life, as well as the characteristics that describe them. Authors are able to offer insights into human nature, about why some people are noble and some are despicable, and the reasons why some are not pleasant while others are. This gives us an opportunity to understand people and learn to accept them for who they are knowing that we live different lives which shape us to the way we are. I understand that there are people who are torn between love and honor and would gladly chose death in order to restore his honor like Antony in Antony and Cleopatra, or that a woman can be like The Wife of Bath in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. I was able to glean how coming from a different culture can somehow push someone to isolate himself from the others like Shylock in Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice.

Also, arts and literature bring us to certain situations that we may never get to experience in our lifetime. These instances give us a chance to see the details of a certain situation and assess our ideas about them before forming perceptions. As in the story of Jane in Pride and Prejudice, I see the importance of acting appropriately in consideration of the feelings and pride of our family. I was able to understand how devastating it would be for

parents if a child gets criticize by others. I was also able to understand the destructive consequences that can be brought about by jealousy. Reading literatures is like looking into a seeing glass and having the opportunity to analyze every nuance and detail of a certain situation. We gain insights about certain scenarios that we would never have known if we did not read literature.

Unlike maths and sciences, arts and literature don't prescribe specific formulas that will lead to the understanding of our values and life. We are presented with a world far from our reality and enables us to interpret it the way we see fit. There are no correct or wrong way of seeing it and the depth of understanding that we are able to develop depends on how we reflect on the things and events that unfold in the stories. We gain precious wisdom that we can apply to our lives to make it better for us and those around us. Among the stories I've read, I've realized how important family relationship was back in the days, particularly the obedience of children to their parents. This was a common practice in before which in some instances, disobedience to parents may result to being disowned. Although I have never always obeyed my parents, I don't consider myself rude or insensitive to my parent's feelings. Modern society encourages free will and independence, but always with the right amount of responsibility. Making your own decision and sticking with it even if it goes against what your parents want is not necessarily bad. However, I understand that I should also be prepared for whatever consequences that will result from it. I am now able to appreciate my parents more for giving me such freedom, and after looking at the stories of Romeo and Juliet, Antony, Shylock, and Jane and Mr. Darcy, who were all

at certain levels restricted to act according to their wishes, I will endeavor to be more sensitive to their wishes.

In sum, arts and literature are great ways to improve life. They provide us with an opportunity to develop different perspectives about things and life in general. We also get to look into ourselves and understand the way we perceive things according to our beliefs.