

## Short Essay #3 Prompt

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### Overview

For this assignment, you will need to write a 1-3 page essay that focuses on James Joyce's short story "The Boarding House" in his collection *Dubliners*. Like all good essays, your essay should have a thesis that is supported by textual evidence. Remember, whenever you use any information that is not common knowledge, you need to provide a citation to the source of your information. For example, that the sun is yellow is common knowledge, as is that there was an American revolutionary war. The major concepts of interpreting literature, sadly, are not common knowledge. In this class, we will be using MLA citation. More information about MLA citation can be found at the Purdue Owl website here: [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/mla\\_style/mla\\_style\\_introduction.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_style_introduction.html).

In essay 1, you were asked to consider just one element of fiction (plot) while considering how Joyce's plot choices might affect the values literature can provide. In essay 2, you were asked to build on that by considering the interactions of *two* elements (narration and character) with literary value. For essay 3, I would like you to evaluate any **one** of the three scholarly articles attached:

- Earl G. Ingersol's "The Stigma of Fertility in James Joyce's 'Eveline' and 'The Boarding House'" (contrasting Eveline and Polly as women who bear the stigma of being women, but in contrasting ways) (10 pages)
- Gerald Doherty's "'There Must be Reparation': A Sacrificial Reading of 'The Boarding House'" (considering how the story suggests a kind of sacrifice) (20 pages)
- Louis Parascandola and Maria McGarity's "'I'm a Naughty Girl': Prostitution and Outsider Women in James Joyce's 'The Boarding House' and Eric Walrond's 'The Palm Porch'" (considering how Joyce's story and Walrond's story both feature elements of prostitution) (22 pages)

I have attached all three so that you can glance at them and then pick one that seems interesting to you. **I am not expecting you to read all three!** For the one you pick, I would like you to do your best to understand it, but I am also not expecting you to understand it either. You should give yourself freedom to be confused. Confusion is expected! These are complicated essays. Nonetheless, it is important to start getting familiarity with what actual literary scholarship looks like. After you read your chosen essay, please respond to the prompt below.

### Prompt

In your chosen essay, try to identify and list all **the concepts** (such as "character" or "narration") and **the critical approaches** (such as "psychoanalytic analysis") that you see in the article that we have discussed so far in class. As you do, consider these two questions:

- In your opinion, how successfully does the article use these concepts or critical approaches to analyze "The Boarding House"? Why do you think that?
- Has your understanding of the literary value of "The Boarding House" changed after reading your chosen essay? Why or why not?

As a reminder, the class has developed a list of literary values available through a link at the top of the calendar page.

**Due Date: Tuesday, October 16<sup>th</sup>**