

English 10
Books 1–5 of *The Confessions*
Prep for In-Class Writing

Tomorrow's in-class writing is to be an exploration of Books 1–5 of *The Confessions*. Your task is to produce a well written essay in which you make clear the main argument of the text and then explore the way various literary elements support or amplify the argument you have isolated.

An example of an argument:

In his work *The Iliad* Homer argues that pride is harmful to oneself and others.

This, then, can become a thesis for this writing:

In his work *The Iliad* Homer argues that pride is harmful to oneself and others; we see this argument through his emphasis on the rage of Achilles, his use of epic tropes such as repetition, similes, and epithets, and his very human depiction of Hector.

To apply this pattern to Augustine's text, consider first what he might be arguing overall.

Then, think of the literary devices and elements we have noted (see class notes and the list of study questions). What devices might amplify or support the argument you see?

Then, check your work. Do your ideas span the five books? Is your argument as specific as possible but still generally supportable? Do you have no more than one paragraph focusing on plot?

Tips and admonitions:

- Prepare. You will not be able to write the essay in the time allotted without having prepared.
- Assume your audience has a general understanding of the text. You should provide enough information to be coherent, but need not summarize plot.
- Be sure topic sentences are analytical. (Again, there should be no plot summaries.)
- Be sure you effectively blend and cite passages, as discussed in class.
- Look over the Unlucky 13 sheet. While I know there will be more usage errors because of the time in which you produce the piece, you should try to write as cleanly as possible for maximum effect.

You may bring into class a skeleton outline and use your own book with its annotations. The only permitted pre-written sentence, though, is the thesis. If you choose to type, you may have only one window open on your laptop or tablet, so you will want to print your outline or handwrite it.