Note: This instructional plan format is very flexible and just a guideline. You are welcome to develop a format and structure that applies to your teaching and classroom context and grade level.

In Cold Blood: Analyzing the Impact and Ethicality of the True Crime Genre
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Duration, Grade Level, Number of Students	This unit is taught second semester and requires about four weeks to complete, however, please note that with all the interruptions of second semester and it being a state testing year for students it usually takes longer to get through than planned. I also never read the fourth part of the novel with the class (though students are encouraged to read it during their independent reading time if they are interested) because of time constraints. I would also not advise moving it up in the school year for several reasons: the writing skills addressed in this unit are pulling from many skills that should have been practiced and built up over time during the year and the content of the novel is heavy and without a certain level of trust and community the unit will most likely not go well. 11th grade AP Language and Composition course with 55-minute class periods. I teach four sections of this course and there are typically anywhere from 16-32 students in a section.
Instructional Materials	*In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote **All page numbers used in the unit are based off of the 1994 edition of the novel. Paper and basic art supplies (though the mini project this is for could also be done digitally without these items) "Truman Capote, America's Author-Celebrity" by Joseph Stromberg "Tru Life: How Truman Capote became a cautionary tale of celebrity culture" by Danny Heitman PHOTOS: Cold-blooded killings: A look at the Clutter family murders by Joanna Moriello "Capote in Kansas Stanley Kauffman's original review of Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*" Computer/electronic devices (my district is 1:1, so all students are provided with a laptop, but anything done digitally in this unit could be done on paper if needed)

	"The Story Behind a Nonfiction Novel" by George Plimpton **Please note: I only use an excerpt of this. You can use the full thing, or you can create your own selection/excerpt. "Why do we love true crime—and is it healthy for us?" by F. Diane Barth "Highlighting The Truth in True Crime" by the editors of The Daily Free Press "In defense of the true crime genre" by Valentina Guerra "True crime podcasts are popular in the U.S., particularly among women and those with less formal education" by Sarah Naseer and Christopher St. Aubin "Half of Americans enjoy true crime, and more agree it helps solve cold cases" by Taylor Orth "Popularity and Impact of True Crime Content" by Vivint Synthesis Essay and Quick Write Rubrics **Extension Only Materials**: *Making a Murderer* episodes 1 and 2 on Netflix and a tv or screen to project it to.
Key Vocabulary and Concepts	Genre True Crime Synthesis Argument Analysis Rhetoric/Rhetorical Situation/Rhetorical Analysis Ethics/Ethical/Ethicality Morals Culture Impact Justification Evaluate Diction Syntax Credibility Bias Perspective Purpose

	Source(s)
Enduring Understanding	Through this instructional plan, students will gain an enduring understanding of how to carefully analyze various sources written on the same subject for their validity, credibility, biases, intentions, impact on readers, etc. and be able to then synthesize those sources to develop, express, and defend their own perspectives on the topic. In this case, the subject is true crime as a genre with *In Cold Blood* centered as the main text since Truman Capote claimed, and is recognized by some, to have pioneered the genre of true crime "nonfiction novel".
Essential Question(s)	Who was Truman Capote? What is true crime? What does it mean to be ethical? How does perspective change a story? To what extent is the true crime genre ethical? What value can be found within the genre of true crime? How does(has) true crime impact(ed) our society?
Standards	**AP Language and Composition:** **Rhetorical Situation** Explain how writers' choices reflect the components of the rhetorical situation. Make strategic choices in a text to address a rhetorical situation. **Claims and Evidence** Identify and describe the claims and evidence of an argument. Analyze and select evidence to develop and refine a claim. **Reasoning and Organization** Describe the reasoning, organization, and development of an argument. Use organization and commentary to illuminate the line of reasoning in an argument. **Style** Explain how writers' stylistic choices contribute to the purpose of an argument. Select words and use elements of composition to advance an argument. **Oklahoma Academic Standards for ELA:** **Standard 1: Listening and Speaking** Students will listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations. Students will develop and apply effective communication skills through active listening. Students will develop and apply effective communication skills to share ideas through speaking. **Standard 3: Critical Reading and Writing** Students will apply critical thinking skills to reading and writing. Students will analyze, interpret, and evaluate increasingly complex literary and informational texts that include a wide range of historical, cultural, ethnic, and global perspectives from a variety of genres. Students will thoughtfully and intentionally write, addressing a range of modes, purposes, and audiences. **Standard 6: Research** Students will engage in inquiry to acquire, refine, and communicate accurate information. Students will gather, comprehend, evaluate, and synthesize researched information to acquire and refine knowledge. Students will synthesize information ethically through speaking and writing. **Standard 7: Multimodal Literacies** Students will comprehend and communicate knowledge through alphabetic, aural, visual, spatial, and/or gestural content.
Learning Objectives	Following the AP Language and Composition Skills standards: 1.A Students will identify and describe components of the rhetorical situation: the exigence, audience, writer, purpose, context, and message.

1.B   Students will explain how an argument demonstrates understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs

2.A Students will write introductions and conclusions appropriate to the purpose and context of the rhetorical situation.

3.C Students will explain ways claims are qualified through modifiers, counterarguments, and alternative perspectives.

4.A Students will develop a paragraph that includes a claim and evidence supporting the claim.

4.B Students will write a thesis statement that requires proof or defense and that may preview the structure of the argument.

4.C Students will qualify a claim using modifiers, counterarguments, or alternative perspectives

6.A Students will develop a line of reasoning and commentary that explains it throughout an argument.

7.A Students will explain how word choice, comparisons, and syntax contribute to the specific tone or style of a text.

Following the Oklahoma Academic Standards for ELA:

11.1.S.1 Students will work effectively and respectfully in diverse groups by showing willingness to make necessary compromises to accomplish a goal, sharing responsibility for collaborative work, and recognizing individual contributions.

11.1.S.2 Students will follow agreed-upon rules as they engage in collaborative discussions about what they are reading and writing, expressing their own ideas clearly, building on the ideas of others, and respectfully disagreeing, when necessary, in pairs, diverse groups, and whole-class settings.

11.3.R.1 Students will analyze the extent to which historical, cultural, and/or global perspectives affect authors' stylistic choices in grade-level literary and informational texts.

11.3.R.2 Students will evaluate authors' perspectives and explain how those perspectives contribute to the meanings of texts.

11.3.R.5 Students will evaluate how authors writing on the same issue reached different conclusions because of differences in assumptions, evidence, reasoning, and viewpoints, including examining rhetorical appeals, bias, and use of logical fallacies.

11.3.W.3 Students will compose argumentative essays, reviews, or op-eds that: ● introduce precise, informed claims ● include a defensible thesis ● acknowledge counterclaims or alternate perspectives ● organize claims, counterclaims, and evidence in a logical sequence ● provide the most relevant evidence to develop balanced arguments, using credible sources ● use sentence variety and word choice to create clarity and concision ● use style and tone that suits the audience and purpose

11.6.R.2 Students will synthesize relevant information from a variety of primary and secondary sources, following ethical and legal citation guidelines.

11.6.R.3 Students will evaluate the relevance, reliability, and validity of the information gathered.

11.6.W.2 Students will develop a clear, concise, defensible thesis statement.

11.6.W.3 Students will integrate quotes, paraphrases, and summaries from research, following a consistent citation style (e.g., MLA, APA) to avoid plagiarism.

	11.7.R Students will analyze and evaluate the techniques used in a variety of multimodal content and how they contribute to meaning.
Background	Teachers should have read all the materials before beginning the unit so that they understand how they all intersect and work with one another and can guide students in making connections. Teachers should understand who Truman Capote was and his influence on not only literature but the culture of the time. Teachers should have a grasp on the AP Language and Composition rubrics and skills listed above in this unit—though they could be adapted to whatever rubrics/standards required. Teachers should also have a deep understanding of their students and what they can handle—this novel includes some heavy subject matter, and they need to be aware if they need to skip a page or if their students can handle reading certain content with support, etc. Teachers should have established both a positive group environment and writing culture before beginning this unit. It is very discussion and writing focused. Students should have been exposed to all three types of AP Language and Composition essays/free response questions and the major concepts associated with each should have been taught and practiced. Students should have at least a basic grasp on the concepts of genre, point of view, syntax, diction, rhetoric, evidence and citation, and line of reasoning. Students should be comfortable talking in small groups and have practiced with timed writing consistently throughout the school year up to this point.
Suggested Procedure	***Please note: group discussions can be done in many ways. Even though this unit mostly does think-pair-shares, I do mix these up occasionally depending on how students respond, and teachers should conduct discussions in whatever ways work best for them and their students.** **DAY 1 Introduce Truman Capote and *In Cold Blood.*** Read "Tru Life: How Truman Capote Became a Cautionary Tale of Celebrity Culture" and "Truman Capote, America's Author-Celebrity" as a class or have students read silently. This should take approximately 15 to 20 minutes. Have students look for and mark tone words, places where they think the author's purpose is indicated, and at least three things they learn about Capote they think will be relevant when we read *In Cold Blood.* This can be done digitally or on paper if you print copies of the articles. After the reading and annotation of the articles have students work in pairs or small groups for about 20 minutes to discuss and answer the following questions: • What were the tones of the two articles? What words or passages indicated this to you? • Do the two articles have the same purpose, and what do you believe the purpose(s) of the articles to be? What from the articles would you use as evidence for your answer?

- What do you believe will be the most important thing to keep in mind about Truman Capote as we begin reading his nonfiction novel *In Cold Blood*? Explain your reasoning.

For the last 15 minutes or so, discuss as a whole class the different answers/conclusions that students came up with in their groups. As an exit ticket, have students answer the last question again after group discussion on a sticky note, index card, or a digital poll. This will help catch any answers that weren't shared out loud, give anyone who has changed their minds a chance to express themselves, and if any key details were not put down or discussed then you can address them before the class begins reading the novel For example, if no one points out that Capote did not use any sort of recording equipment during his research/interviews for the novel this would be something I would remind students of and we could have another discussion about why that might be important to note as we read.

DAY 2 Clutter Family Murders Gallery Walk and Discussion
Print out photographs (or put onto slides that you project one at a time) from the *New York Daily News* article "PHOTOS: Cold-blooded killings: A look at the Clutter family murders" and place them around the room. Tell students that all the photographs have something to do with the murders and/or the novel *In Cold Blood* that was written about them. Then, have students work in groups of about three to four, depending on the class size, and go around writing descriptions of what/who they think each photograph is of, its significance, and what about the photo (things in it, facial expressions, clothing, hairstyles, etc.) makes them come to their hypotheses. These descriptions do not need to be in complete sentences, but they should have specific reasons for their guesses. Give students only a few minutes with each photo (there are 12 total). Other photos could be substituted for these, but it would be important to make sure that all major "characters" still appear somewhere in the pictures. This should take about 30 minutes.

When all groups have seen all photos, discuss each photo as a class before revealing the real subject and context of each picture. This exercise is to demonstrate how we take in and interpret visual information without written context. It opens great discussion about the time period, lighting, biases, the importance of understanding how first impressions can be either useful or harmful, and it is a more interesting way to introduce the subject of the novel before we begin reading. It is very important to frontload with this novel as it is very intense, and it could be overwhelming or distressing without proper preparation and discussion about the heavy topics and themes that will appear throughout.

DAY 3 Begin reading the novel *In Cold Blood.* This is typically around pages 1-22. Pause for discussion throughout. Things we usually discuss are how settings and characterization are established and why they are important, why

Capote might have written from the point of view(s) he did and the effect(s) it has, foreshadowing, how accurate we think the character depictions are, etc.

** I do recommend reading the novel in class and all together due to the nature of the novel and the amount of racially charged, violent language that occurs throughout in the sections of the book from the perspectives/point of views of the murderers. It is much easier to make sure students understand why that language is present and the effect it is meant to have when reading as a group. Depending on the district/community/individual students, you may also want to find those pages and skip them, let students know they will see those words on the page even though they will not be read out loud, or make any other accommodations that may be needed.

I also have students begin taking notes on characterization in a T-chart to help them keep track of the things we note as a class and things they notice individually—this chart will continue with them throughout at least Part 1 of the novel. As people come up in the novel, students write the person's name in the left column of the chart, and they write notes and the page numbers where they got that information in the right column.

DAY 4 Read pages 23-37, continue class discussions about setting, characters, and point of view. Have students continue to do reading T-chart notes.

DAY 5 Read pages 38-55, continue class discussions about setting, characters, and point of view. Have students continue to do reading T-chart notes.

DAY 6 Read pages 55-74, continue discussions about setting, characters, point of view, foreshadowing. Have students finish reading T-chart notes and keep them in their folder, binder, or OneDrive/Google folder for if they need to refer to them for clarification on something later. This is the end of Part 1 of the novel.

DAY 7 Take a break from reading the novel. Have students read an excerpt from a Truman Capote interview about the novel and an initial review of the book from 1965 when it was first published. As they are reading, students should answer the following questions in complete sentences. Give students about 25-30 minutes for this.

1. What is the main difference between the Capote interview and the Kauffman review? Explain. (**note that there are multiple acceptable answers to this, but the students must explain themselves)
2. In the interview, Capote says, "the human heart being what it is, murder was a theme not likely to darken and yellow with time," in

explaining why he chose the subject of the Clutter murders for his nonfiction novel. What does he mean by this, and do you believe this is true? Explain.

3. What was the most important thing you learned from the interview with Capote about the writing of the novel? Why do you think this information is the most important?

4. In your own words, summarize Kauffman's opinion of Capote's novel *In Cold Blood*. What are his major talking points? Having read Part I of the novel, do you agree or disagree with these points/opinions? Explain.

Give them time (10-15 minutes depending on how long it takes to complete readings and questions) to discuss in small groups when finished, then have a brief full class discussion/overview of their answers. If you run out of time, the class discussion can be continued on into the first 5-10 minutes of the next day.

DAY 8 Have students read three short true crime pro/con articles with varying opinions and types of evidence. The three I use are "In defense of the true crime genre" by Valentina Guerra, "Highlighting the Truth in True Crime" by the Daily Free Press Editors, and "Why do we love true crime—and is it healthy for us?" by F. Diane Barth. I will change these out in another year or so to make sure that the articles I use are staying up to date, but these have worked well the last few years. Students should get pretty much the whole class period to work on these. If there is time/it looks like students are wrapping up their discussions and writing earlier, then bring everyone back in for a whole class discussion for the last ten minutes of class—or at least discuss the last question as a class.

Students should read these to themselves and then answer the following questions in groups:

1. What is true crime? Define it in your own words.

2. a.What is the thesis of "In defense of true crime"?
   b. What do they use to defend or prove this thesis?
   c. What parts of their defense are most effective? Explain.

3. a. What is the thesis of "Highlighting the Truth in True Crime"?
   b. What do they use to defend or prove this thesis?
   c. What parts of their defense are most effective? Explain.

4. a.What is the thesis of "Why do we love true crime—and is it healthy for us"?
   b. What do they use to defend or prove this thesis?
   c. What parts of their defense are most effective? Explain.

5. What is YOUR opinion on the genre of true crime? To what extent is it exploitive? To what extent is it valuable? Explain.

6. How do your opinions/points, and those of the authors of the articles you read today, apply to *In Cold Blood* based on what you have read so far? Explain.

DAY 9 Begin Part II and read pages 74-93. Students should develop a timeline of major events as we read Part II. Continue to pause for mini discussions throughout about why certain events are significant/possibly significant to the story, racism, self-hatred (especially as it pertains to Perry Smith), ethical concerns connected to how the story was told, how setting and time contributed to how events unfolded, etc.

DAY 10 Read pages 94-95, 101-107. We are skipping pages 96-100 and 108-part of 113.

Then give students the instructions for the mini symbolism project. This project can be done on paper with art supplies or rendered digitally through whatever program you wish (my district prefers and provides Canva accounts to students).

1. Have students select a recurring symbol or theme from the novel (must be able to cite at least two places it appears—I remind students to check their character notes and timelines for ideas).
2. Then, students will create an image or mood board depicting that symbol or theme—if given specific colors in the novel then they should color it accordingly. Otherwise, they have creative control.
3. Along with the image(s) they create for the symbol/theme they should have their citations for where it appears in the novel (at least 2), a list of the names of characters and/or settings connected to it, and a brief paragraph explaining the significance and meaning of their chosen symbol.

I typically tell students to avoid picking the same symbol as anyone at their table (my students sit in groups of 3-4) and let them know that they should use up all of the space on their paper, slide, or infographic page, etc.

This should fall on a Friday, so if they aren't finished at the end of the class period, they may take it home and submit the project on Monday (Day 11) at the beginning of class. Once they are submitted and graded, I hang these up for students to see each other's work/ideas.

DAY 11 Read second half of page 113-131, have students continue their timelines, and continue mini discussions as you read.

DAY 12 Skip 132 and 133. Read pages 134-the end of Part II and finish timelines. Have students keep their timelines with their character notes in their folder, binder, or OneDrive/Google folder.

DAY 13 Have students read and analyze three multimodal articles (they all include some sort of chart, graph, and/or image that are key to their points) about true crime. This is great for practice interpreting images and graphs in connection to argument and rhetoric. The articles I am currently using for this are "True crime podcasts are popular in the U.S., particularly among women and those with less formal education" by Sarah Naseer and Christopher St. Aubin, "Half of Americans enjoy true crime, and more agree it helps solve cold cases" by Taylor Orth, and "Popularity and Impact of True Crime Content" by Vivint. As students are reviewing the articles have them respond to the following prompts in complete sentences either in groups or by themselves.

1. What was the most important piece of information in **each** article in your opinion? Explain why you believe each thing is the most important.

2. What was the main idea of **each** article?

3. List three interesting facts (1 per article) that you learned.

4. Who do you think the intended audience of **each** article was? Be as specific as possible and explain your reasoning.

DAY 14 Begin Part III. Read pages 159-about 170. Then, have students do a quick write.

This is where I give students a prompt and they must keep writing until either the end of the class period or until they have successfully made their complete point on the topic. They are not supposed to pause and overthink it, they do not have to worry about grammar or spelling, etc. It is all about getting the ideas out on the page. Those are pretty much the only requirements other than that they need to write for at least ten to fifteen minutes of the time (at this point in the year they have built up to that amount of time and many can write for much longer by this time. I do this because it helps get them out of their own heads a bit and it helps them practice for the timed free response questions on the AP exam at the end of the year).

Quick Write Prompt: To what extent, if any, is Floyd Wells responsible for the murders of the Clutter family. Explain your response using details from the book (you do not have to directly quote) and discuss any possible

repercussions you believe he may (or may not) have deserved. You may also add examples from your own experiences, ideas on morality, and/or knowledge of true crime and the law/justice system if you wish to, but this is not required.

DAY 15 Continue reading Part III and pausing for mini discussions as things come up. There are more places where you may want to skip whether for content or time in this section. Read 171, skip 172-174, 175-top half of page 183, skip second half of page 183 through the top half of page 187, then read bottom half of 187 through the top half of page 192. Skip the second half of page 192 through the half of page 193. Then, read 193-199 and skip 200 through 202. From there, you should be able to read through 218 without anymore concerns. (If you would prefer to read all the way through, that is fine, but I am including possible pages to skip if you feel uncomfortable with student even seeing certain words on a page. I always explain to students briefly what they are missing on those pages if I choose to skip them).

DAY 16 Continue reading Part III and pausing periodically for mini discussions. Read 218 through 236.

DAY 17 Finish Part III and have final mini discussions. Then, have students do another quick write.

Quick Write Prompt:

How well do you feel the novel *In Cold Blood* represents true crime as a genre, and what are your overall opinions of the novel now that we have completed the sections that we will read as a class? Explain your responses using details from the novel (you do not need to use direct quotes).

DAY 18 Introduce the prompt(s) and begin drafting synthesis essays. **Students must choose ONE prompt.**

Prompt Options:
To what extent is the genre of true crime valuable to society, and does *In Cold Blood* contribute to that value?

To what extent can true crime be produced ethically, and was *In Cold Blood* an example of ethical true crime?

Requirements for both essay prompts:
- **Clear thesis statement that takes a defensible position.**

- **Use *In Cold Blood* as a source and synthesize material from at least 3 other sources to develop their position (at least two must be from the readings done in class). These sources should be cited correctly in MLA format (this is the district chosen format for English classes in my district). Sources found on their own should be from a reliable website, book, etc.**
- **Explain how their sources/evidence support their line of reasoning.**
- **Use appropriate grammar and punctuation to communicate their argument and format the paper using MLA.**
- **Students should have an introduction, body paragraphs (however many needed to make all major points from thesis), and a conclusion.**

By the end of the class period, I typically expect students to have picked a prompt, written a first draft of their thesis, and to have written a very basic outline that includes ideas for which sources they will use to support each of their thesis points. Some students may have even started a draft. Students are allowed to work on the paper outside of class as well if they are behind or want to get ahead. As students are working, I walk around the room and assist as needed in picking prompts, writing/checking thesis statements, and choosing sources.

DAY 19 Essay Draft Day
Using their outlines from yesterday, students are expected to do essentially a quick write first draft. I ask them to pull up the sources they planned to use during their planning the day before, not overthink it, and to pretend they are doing a timed free response question (FRQ) on the AP exam (which they get about an hour to forty-five minutes per FRQ depending on how they use their time). This way they have a working draft by the end of the class period. I am also available for help if they do get stuck.

If students do not have a working first draft by the end of the hour, then I ask them to finish it up as homework.

DAY 20 Final Class Essay Draft Day

Students should come into class with a completed first draft. I have them pair up and swap essays for someone else to read. This is not a full peer edit, but I ask them to look for their partner's introduction and thesis, three sources (not including *In Cold Blood*) in their body paragraphs, that they have a conclusion that doesn't end abruptly, and that there is nothing glaringly confusing. This should only take them the first quarter of the class period. Once they have read through they give their partner any feedback verbally—I am walking around the room making sure it is all constructive. Once students have gotten feedback from their partners they work on fixing any big issues first like a

	missing source or conclusion, etc., then start working on fixing any grammar, spelling, or punctuation mistakes. Again, I am walking around and available for help. If I notice a student struggling, then I approach them to offer to read what they have and assist them. If students feel they are done, then they may turn in the paper at the end of the hour, but if they would like to spend more time on the essay and do another draft then they can work on it over the weekend and submit the paper on Monday at the beginning of their class period. ****If I happen to have more time in the schedule, I give students more class time to work on their papers, but usually other things have interrupted enough that we run out of time.**
Evaluations (Assessment)	**See attached rubrics for quick writes, mini project, and essay assessments All other activities, discussions, and notes are either just for student use or a simple participation check.
Extension	Making a Murderer Netflix documentary series episode(s) one and/or two (another documentary could be substituted here, but this one is rated TV-14 and many others are rated R, so those could be harder to get approved by administration if that is something that your district requires before showing films/videos) and read Part IV of the novel *In Cold Blood* with the class. The docuseries would be included to make the unit more multimodal and to look at a more modern example of true crime media. This would allow students to compare the two forms, examine how different time periods change the way a story is told, analyze more of how public opinion can be swayed and influence an investigation, and look at the justice system process. Part IV would also give students a look at the justice system, look at how stories can change as court cases and appeals go on, and show more clearly some of the biases or sympathies that some claim Capote developed while working on the novel. **I have never had the time to do either of these things, but if I had the time I would do so. I may also swap out some of the true crime articles for the documentary episodes in the future to see how it goes and to give students more hands-on work evaluating real pros and cons of specific true crime media beyond the novel.
Resources	**Print Resources:** Capote, T. (1994). *In Cold Blood.* Vintage Books. **Electronic Resources:**

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Plimpton, G. (1966, January 16). *The Story Behind a Nonfiction Novel.* The New York Times. https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/97/12/28/home/capote-interview.html?r=1

Stromberg, J. (2011, August 25) *Truman Capote, America's Author-Celebrity*. Smithsonian Magazine. https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/truman-capote-americas-author-celebrity-62950052/

Vivint. (2023). *Popularity and Impact of True Crime Content.* Vivint.

https://www.vivint.com/resources/article/true-crime-numbers

	Extension Resources: Ricciardi, L., Demos, M. (2018). *Making a Murderer.* Netflix.

Instructional plan format adapted from the Western History Association/Charles Redd Center Teaching Western History Award.

AP Language and Composition True Crime Synthesis FRQ Rubric (adapted from the AP Synthesis Rubric)

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Thesis	0 points for any of the following: • There is no defensible thesis. • The intended thesis only restates the prompt. • The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim. • There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt	10 points Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
Evidence and Commentary	0 points Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information or references fewer than two sources.	5 points EVIDENCE: Provides evidence from or references at least two sources. AND COMMENTARY: Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the student's argument.	10 points EVIDENCE: Provides evidence from or references at least three sources and In Cold Blood. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student's argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.	15 points EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence from at least three sources and In Cold Blood to support all claims in a line of reasoning. At least two of the sources used are from class readings. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning.	20 points EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence from at least three sources and In Cold Blood to support all claims in a line of reasoning. At least two of the sources used are from class readings. AND COMMENTARY: Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
Introduction and Conclusion	0 points The introduction and conclusion are not present. OR Both are confusing, irrelevant, and/or cut off abruptly.	10 points The introduction or conclusion is missing. OR One of them is confusing, irrelevant, and/or cut off abruptly.	20 points Provides both an introduction and conclusion. AND Both the introduction and conclusion are well-written and flow well with the rest of the essay.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria			
Grammar, Mechanics, Spelling, and Format	0 points Little to no evidence of MLA formatting. AND Grammar, mechanics, and spelling elements are lacking to the point where the essay is difficult to read and understand.	5 points Some evidence of an attempt to use proper MLA formatting is present. AND There are many grammar, mechanics, and/or spelling mistakes that occasionally impede understanding.	10 points MLA formatting is mostly correct with some errors AND Some grammar, mechanics, and/or spelling mistakes are present, but they do not impede understanding.	15 points MLA formatting is done correctly. AND Little to no grammar, mechanics, and/or spelling mistakes present.

***May give up to 5 points extra credit if student writing would earn a sophistication point (on the AP rubric for the exam). See the criteria for this below, but it is not part of the official scoring/rubric for my class essays. Students do not have to have earned every other point to earn sophistication, but they should have earned many of them.

Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation. Responses that earn these points may demonstrate sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation by doing any of the following:
1. Crafting a nuanced argument by consistently identifying and exploring complexities or tensions across the sources.
2. Articulating the implications or limitations of an argument (either the student's argument or arguments conveyed in the sources) by situating it within a broader context.
3. Making effective rhetorical choices that consistently strengthen the force and impact of the student's argument throughout the response.
4. Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.

Quick Write Rubric

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria			
Thesis	0-5 points No thesis was written OR it was indefensible.	6 points Thesis was completely off-topic but defensible.	8 points Thesis was present and defensible.	10 points Thesis was present, defensible, and complex.
On-Topic/Answers Prompt	Did not answer/write anything in response to the prompt OR the response was completely off-topic	Response veers off from the topic frequently and may not fully answer the prompt.	Response fully answers the prompt but does go off-topic more than once.	Response fully answers the prompt and only goes off-topic once if ever.
Evidence	Did not attempt to use details from the text to support their argument at all OR all of the details used were irrelevant to the argument.	Made an attempt to use details from the text for support, but it was minimal and/or many of the details were irrelevant to the argument.	Used details from the text to support their argument but occasionally the evidence did not fully support the argument	Consistently and successfully used details from the text to support all points in the argument.

Symbolism Mini Project

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria			
Recurring Theme or Symbol	0-5 points Either no symbol/theme is present at all, no symbol/theme image is present, or it is a symbol/theme that does not appear more than once in the novel.	6 points Symbol/theme is present and appears more than once in the novel, but the image is sloppy and/or the space is not used up well.	8 points Symbol/theme is present and appears more than once in the novel, but there is some room for improvement with the presentation/use of space.	10 points Symbol/theme is present, appears more than once in the novel, and the image demonstrates effort and excellent use of space.
Citations	Either no citations present OR both citations are irrelevant.	One citation is present and relevant.	Two citations present, but one is not fully relevant.	At least two citations present and relevant.
Character/Setting List	Character/setting list is not present OR there are consistent inaccuracies.	Character/setting list is present, but there are a few inaccuracies.	Character/setting list is present and accurate.	Character/setting list is present, accurate, and thorough.
Paragraph	Paragraph is not present, paragraph does not explain the meaning of the chosen symbol or theme, and/or there are extensive grammar and mechanics mistakes to the point where it is difficult to understand/read.	Paragraph attempts to explain the meaning of the chosen symbol or theme but is not fully successful. There are some grammar and/or mechanics mistakes.	Paragraph explains the significance and meaning of the chosen symbol or theme. There are a few grammar and/or mechanics mistakes.	Paragraph thoroughly explains the significance and meaning of the chosen symbol or theme. There are few, if any, grammar or mechanics mistakes.