# English 10A – Unit 4 Expository Essay



# SUGGESTED TOPICS

## Portfolio Requirements (24 points)

Write a 5 paragraph essay that presents information or offers an explanation related to a literary work or author from Units 1 - 4.

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“Expository essays discuss topics by using facts rather than opinions, requiring students to evaluate and investigate while setting forth their arguments clearly and concisely” (Kelly).

## General topic starters:

* Explain the effect of (author’s) life on (story in the unit)
* Explain why…
* Explain the cause and effect of…
* Describe the consequences of…
* Describe the impact of (literary work) on \_\_\_\_.
* Describe \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ society.
* Explain the use of (technique) in (literary work).
* Explain the effect of (author’s) background on (literary work).
* Explain how a literary allusion in (literary work) supports the overall idea or characterization.

## Unit 1 stories:

* Aztec legend that is part of the Mexican coat of arms also shows up in the “Aztec Creation Story.”
* The “Aztec Creation Story” reflects moral values of the ancient Aztec society.
* Teotihuacan, the setting of the “Aztec Creation Story,” is an ancient city near Mexico City.
* Sacrifice was important in Aztec religion and in the “Aztec Creation Story.”
* The capital of the Aztec Empire, Teotihuacan, is one of the settings of the “Aztec Creation Story.”
* Explain the cause and effect of the “Gettysburg Address.”
* Explain why MLK Jr. was jailed in Birmingham, and the impact of “Letter from Birmingham Jail.”
* Describe unique features of Canadian society and connect to “At the Tourist Center.”
* Describe successful techniques to help elementary students create a common community, and what could have been done in “Day of the Butterfly.”
* Explain the effect of Alice Munro’s life on “Day of the Butterfly.”
* Describe the area of Tonaya, the setting of “Two Dogs Bark.”
* Describe the influence of the Mexican Revolution on the author of “Two Dogs Bark.”
* Explain why Octavio Paz was a recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature, and those qualities in “Two Bodies.”
* Describe the effect of Albert Camus on Carlos Solorzano and “Crossroads.”
* Describe the use of surrealism or existentialism in “Crossroads: A Sad Vaudeville.”

## Unit 2 stories:

* Explain Vendler’s quotation (page 70) in light of Walcott’s life and “Love After Love.”
* Describe how Samuel Selvon’s background is reflected in “When Greek Meets Greek”
* “When Greek Meets Greek” topics: population of foreigners in England, origin of "When in Rome," traditional Indian clothing, or cultural information about Jamaica and why it is called the West Indies.
* Handicrafts/dolls in Puerto Rico and “The Youngest Doll”
* Describe gender issues in Puerto Rican society and “The Youngest Doll”
* Describe the influence of Ferre's family background on ideas in "The Youngest Doll"
* Describe the Faustian Bargain in “The Third Bank of the River”
* Explain the symbolism of crossing the river in several stories, including “The Third Bank of the River”
* Describe the influence of Argentina in works by Jorge Juis Borges, including “The Book of Sand.”
* Describe the consequences of censorship in a particular society (like North Korea or China), and how it relates to “The Censors”
* Describe Pablo Neruda’s experiences in Chile and relate it to his poem, “Tonight I Can Write.”
* Describe Jamaican cultural references in “Girls Can We Educate We Dads”
* Explain why James Berry received the Officer of the British Empire award, and his unique qualities in “Girls Can We Educate We Dads?”
* Describe Gabriela Mistral’s influence in Latin American education and her identification with the poor and indigenous peoples, and relate it to her poem, “Serenity.”
* Describe Colombia’s Nevado Ruiz volcanic eruption in 1985 and controversy over the disaster response in Armero, and relate it to “And of Clay Are We Created.”

## Unit 3 novel:

* Education in Missouri in 1840 and as shown in *Huckleberry Finn*
* The education of Huck Finn influenced the events in the novel and the things that Huck learned
* The abolitionist movement of the 1800s and attitudes towards slavery in *Huckleberry Finn*
* Political satire in the mid-1800s and *Huckleberry Finn*
* Con men in the mid-1800s and *Huckleberry Finn*
* Temperance movement in the 1840s and *Huckleberry Finn*
* Similarities between the Shepherdson and Grangerford feud in the novel and the Civil War
* Mississippi Riverboats in 1800s and *Huckleberry Finn*

## Unit 4 stories:

* Describe the use of confession in the Roman Catholic church and in “First Confession.”
* Describe the importance of potatoes and/or the Potato Famine in Irish history and “Clearances”
* Explain the dangers of ocean swimming and its relation to “Not Waving But Drowning.”
* Describe the signs that someone may be suicidal, and their relation to “Not Waving But Drowning.”
* Explain why T.S. Eliot was awarded the Nobel Prize, and the similar qualities in “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.”
* Explain why German society accepted the expulsion of Jews as described in “Ten Songs” by Auden.
* Describe why some teens participate in gang-related destructive behavior as shown in “The Destructors.”
* Describe the development and use of the flamenco guitar and its relation to “The Guitar”
* Explain ways that someone can overcome self-doubt and how those ways are or are not shown in “Poor Fish”