SAMPLE PATTERNS FOR THESES ON LITERARY WORKS

1. In (title of work), (author) (illustrates, shows) (aspect) (adjective).
Example: In “Barn Burning,” William Faulkner shows the characters Sardie and Abner Snopes struggling for their identity.

2. In (title of work), (author) uses (one aspect) to (define, strengthen, illustrate) the (element of work).
Example: In “Youth,” Joseph Conrad uses foreshadowing to strengthen the plot.

3. In (title of work), (author) uses (an important part of work) as a unifying device for (one element), (another element), and (another element). The number of elements can vary from one to four.
Example: In “Youth,” Joseph Conrad uses the sea as a unifying device for setting, structure and theme.

4. (Author) develops the character of (character’s name) in (literary work) through what he/she does, what he/she says, what other people say to or about him/her.
Example: Langston Hughes develops the character of Semple in “Ways and Means”…

5. In (title of work), (author) uses (literary device) to (accomplish, develop, illustrate, strengthen) (element of work).
Example: In “The Masque of the Red Death,” Poe uses the symbolism of the stranger, the clock, and the seventh room to develop the theme of death.

6. (Author) (shows, develops, illustrates) the theme of __________ in the (play, poem, story).
Example: Flannery O’Connor illustrates the theme of the effect of the selfishness of the grandmother upon the family in “A Good Man is Hard to Find.”

7. (Author) develops his character(s) in (title of work) through his/her use of language.
Example: John Updike develops his characters in “A & P” through his use of figurative language.

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