**Tension in the Text: Analysis of a Soliloquy or Monologue**

**Select a monologue or soliloquy from the act you will be teaching.**  Soliloquies and monologues give audiences a greater window into the minds of the characters who speak them**.** Make sure that your selection is not the same passage as any other member of your group. The selection must be at least ten lines long, but don’t be afraid to select a longer passage as that gives you more to work with.

1. **Annotate the Text:**
2. Look Closely: How is it made? What are the key elements? Circle key terms: those that are defined, repeated, and/or that help summarize.
3. Select Details: Which elements contribute most to overall meaning?

Underline with a purpose.

1. Find Patterns: What repeats? What is the structure and how does it support key ideas?
2. Infer: What is going on beneath the surface? What is implied, symbolic, or metaphorical?
3. Draw Conclusions: How can I clearly explain the overall meaning?

On the left margin write your summaries (What is the author saying?)

On the right margin mark your analysis (What is the author doing?)

* Diction: What words need to be defined? What relationships or patterns do you see among any words in the text? What are the various connotative meanings of the words in the text?
* What allusions, if any, are in the text?
* Notice techniques: paradox, antithesis, imagery, figures of speech, etc.
* What elements of prosody (the patterns of rhythm and sound) can you note or discuss?
* What is the tone of the passage?
* How do all of the elements of the text support and develop the overall theme?
* Represent with drawings (if you like)
* Ask questions
1. **Structure the Essay and Analyze the Text:**

A. Define Context: Where does this passage fall in the play? Who is saying it? What is going on at the time to prompt this speech? Tragedies are based on cause and effect, each scene progressing into the next. Why is understanding this passage crucial to a reasonable interpretation of the work as a whole?

B. Explain: What is the literal meaning of the passage you have chosen?

C. Extend Meaning: You might choose one or more of the following questions to guide you in your explication:

1. Does the passage suggest irreconcilable tensions or contradictions in the text?

2. Does the passage encode symbols or signs that the reader must “decode” to interpret the passage?

3. Does this passage link to patterns or motifs found elsewhere in the play?

4. Can the passage be linked intellectually with a “modern” issue or a text from a different period?

D. Performance Planning: How would you deliver this monologue or soliloquy? What terms would you emphasize? Why? What would your character be thinking (subtext) as he or she delivered his or her lines? How would you stage it? How would the character move, gesture, or respond to other characters? Would there be pregnant pauses (if so, where?), or would it be delivered all at once? Why? What clues in the text do you see?

1. **Check your Format:**

MLA format, double spaced, Times New Roman, 12 point font, with a standard heading are required. A title is an excellent way to set off your paper from the pile.

**Excellent papers** reveal the author’s ability to layer meaning in his or her text as well as document carefully. They are well written and use appropriate language for a formal paper. First and second person (I and you) are not present, sentences are fluent and varied, word choice is interesting and appropriate, and language is lively. Points are well supported by evidence and point to effective performance choices. See the posted rubric.