

**'Significance' in Literature –
Cue for Treason, Chapter 1 – 2**

One of the new skills we teach you in grade nine academic English is to explain why characters, places, objects or even quotations are 'significant' or important to a piece of literature. By doing this, you demonstrate your ability to do analysis, which is a key component of all academic and university- level English courses.

Hold on... What's a quotation??? A quotation is a passage of words from the novel. A quotation does not need to be only when someone is talking... that is 'dialogue'. It is anything that author has written.

List of ways that characters, objects, places or quotations might be significant:

1. They might be **symbolic of an idea** the author is trying to present.
2. They may **reveal a character's personality or motivation.**
3. They may reveal something about a **character relationship**
4. They may **create a conflict** that needs to be solved
5. They may **add to an existing conflict** in an important way.
6. They may **refer to a decision a character must make and the consequences** of that decision.
7. They may create humour **or produce a comic effect to relieve tension.**
8. They may **foreshadow** events to come.
9. They might **create sympathy or withdraw the audience's sympathy** from a character.
10. They may **advance the plot** (move the story forward).
11. They may **create suspense.**
12. They may be an example of an important **rhetorical device.**

*** this list is really important for you to become familiar with as you will come back to it over and over this semester.*

Ok so now what??? Once you've figured out the way in which a character, object, place or quotation is significant, you will be expected to **explain HOW or WHY** it is significant.

Here's an example of what you will be expected to do this semester.

Describe the following objects, characters or places. Then identify and explain why or how each is significant to the novel: **a stone wall. (2 marks)**

The stone wall is something that Sir Philip built around some of his property in Cumberland when he inherited the land from his grandfather. ✓ (1 mark) It is important to the novel because it creates a conflict that leads to the trigger incident. The families who rent land from him are angry that he is keeping them from using this section of land that they have had access to for very many years. As a result, they decide to knock down the wall at night. ✓ (1 mark)

← Describe

} Identify and explain the significance

Let's Practice 😊

Describe the following objects, characters or places. Then identify and explain why or how each is significant to the novel. Be sure to choose a reason from the list on the front of this handout.

Sir Philip Morton

Describe:

Identify and explain the significance:

A piece of rock

Now, let's practice with a quotation.

Identify and explain why or how the following quotation is significant to the novel.

"Down in the valley, by the river, the meadows have been common land since time immemorial. I don't say they belong to nobody - they belong to us. [...] And heaven help the man who puts a stone wall round them and calls them his - even if he has money and men in livery and a "Sir" in front of his name." (Trease 17)

Now as you read through the novel describe the following objects, characters or places. Then identify and explain why or how each is significant to the novel. Be sure to choose a reason from the list on the front of this handout.

1. Mrs. Jane Desmond
2. William Shakespeare
3. Kit's letter
4. a broken leg
5. an upstairs room
6. Cumberland
7. On your own, add two more objects, two more characters and two more places.