

How to Answer Questions about Literature in This Class:

- Always use complete sentences. In addition to the typical grammar rules, this means **always** using proper capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
- **Answer the question**. This sounds obvious, but when we get in a hurry or forget to pay careful attention, we can easily answer the question we want to answer instead of the one being asked.
- Beware of sentences that begin with the following words: because, that, and so. Only yield those powers if you can control them.
- Generally, authors should be referred to by last name. You may not refer to them by first name only and you should avoid Mr. and Ms.
- Know your audience. If you are not directly speaking to me, avoid use of second person (*you*). If you are referring to a play or speech, you probably want to discuss the *audience*. If you are referring to a book or story, you may mean the *reader* or another character.
- When discussing poetry, do not confuse the author and the speaker.
- Always use precise vocabulary. Instead of saying that something is good, try to say that it is significant or ethical or delicious.
- Remove slang, clichés, and emoticons.
- Use strong verbs. Avoid words like said, quoted, or this also shows...
- Pay special attention to parallelism.
- When quoting, be sure select quotes that actually prove your point.
- When quoting, select short phrases and smoothly embed them in your sentences. Generally avoid long or stand alone quotes.
- When quoting, use an ellipsis (...) to omit words from the middle of a quote.
- When quoting, use [brackets] to add words that clarify within the quote.
- Generally, literature is referred to in the present tense. It is important that tense stays consistent in your work.