

Watchmen Journal Directions

A. Build-a-Prompt Directions

Follow these steps to create your own IB-style essay prompt for the graphic novel Watchmen.

- ① **Review Pre-Notes:** Start by reviewing your pre-notes on postmodern elements (both stylistic and thematic), your broader "Lit Notes" thus far, the little global issues bookmark, and any class discussions about Watchmen — focusing on key thematic elements and literary devices that stood out to you.
- ② **Select a Thematic Motif / Global Issue:** Choose a thematic motif / global issue that resonates with your reading of the text so far.
- ③ **Select a Literary Device:** Identify a specific feature (e.g. symbolism, irony, fragmented narrative, vampiric characterization) that you notice playing a significant role in the text.
- ④ **Select a Question Stem:** Pick a prompt stem from the provided list below that matches the theme or device you want to explore.
- ⑤ **Insert the T.M./G.I. and L.D.:**
 - Where you see [Theme] in the prompt, insert the motif / issue you identified.
 - Where you see [Literary Device], insert the literary device you've chosen.
 - Replace [Work] with Watchmen. ← *underlined*
- ⑥ **Review for Clarity:** Ensure that the prompt you've built actually makes sense and accurately reflects your understanding of Watchmen, your notes, and your study of literary analysis as a whole.
- ⑦ **Optional Peer Review:** Ask a classmate to review your custom prompt to ensure it generally aligns with IB expectations and is clear enough that they'd be comfortable responding to it.
- ⑧ **Finalize Prompt:** Once you're happy with your prompt, write it down on a notecard. (If you're assigned to write multiple prompts, please write each on its own notecard.)

You now have a personalized essay question that reflects your insights into Watchmen! Bring it to class on the assigned date!

Question Stems :

- Consider the extent to which the theme of [Theme] is successfully communicated through the author's use of [Literary Device] in [Work].
- Examine the ways in which [Work] employs [Literary Device] to provide insight into the theme of [Theme].
- In what ways does the use of [Literary Device] in [Work] serve to underscore the theme of [Theme]?

- Explore how [Work] makes use of [Literary Device] to highlight the complexities of [Theme].
- Discuss the impact of narrative voice and perspective in [Work] on your understanding of [Theme], with a specific focus on [Literary Device].
- How does the setting of [Work] enrich the reader's understanding of [Theme], and how is this further emphasized through [Literary Device]?
- With reference to [Work], to what extent does [Literary Device] enhance the theme of [Theme]?
- Assess how [Work] manipulates [Literary Device] to challenge traditional notions of [Theme].
- Consider how and to what extent [Work] deploys [Literary Device] to question or affirm societal beliefs about [Theme].
- Analyze how [Work] utilizes [Literary Device] to develop a dialogue between the reader and the theme of [Theme].
- In the context of [Work], how does [Literary Device] serve to amplify the emotional weight of [Theme]?
- Examine the role of ambiguity in [Work], focusing on how it serves to deepen the exploration of the theme of [Theme].
- Evaluate how [Work] employs [Literary Device] to complicate or simplify the reader's understanding of [Theme].
- To what extent does the use of [Literary Device] in [Work] contribute to the text's commentary on [Theme]?
- How does [Work] engage with the theme of [Theme] through its use of multiple narrative perspectives, specifically focusing on [Literary Device]?
- Discuss how [Work] employs [Literary Device] to blur the lines between fact and fiction in its exploration of [Theme].
- Explore how [Work] makes use of [Literary Device] to create tension and conflict surrounding the theme of [Theme].
- Analyze the role and effectiveness of [Literary Device] in conveying the theme of [Theme] in [Work].
- Discuss how the theme of [Theme] is explored in [Work] through the use of [Literary Device].
- Evaluate the relationship between form and meaning with regard to the theme of [Theme], paying close attention to [Literary Device], in [Work].

B. Symbol Sketches

- ★ All symbol sketches must be completed in ink (no pencil) in your composition book (no spiral-bound or loose-leaf paper)
- ★ All due dates will be posted on the schedule board.

Find a few good symbols ...

Many works of literature include symbols (real things which carry more than literal meaning). Those specific symbols always represent something important to truly experiencing that work of literature. I'm asking you to select *significant* **visual** symbols from throughout *Watchmen*. Consider what objects Moore and Gibbons seem to emphasize through **repetition, juxtaposition, or parallelism** in the novel. Also consider how many of these repeated symbols are **changed** throughout the course of the book.

For each symbol ...

- Use a **full page** for each symbol.
- **Sketch** the symbol as it appears in the text.
- ← **Cite the symbol's location(s).**
- Provide a fitting **name** for the symbol, and underline it.
- In a sentence, explain the **context** the symbol appears in.
- **Respond to the symbol** in about a paragraph. Remember that literature rarely offers simple answers to simple questions. Trust yourself to become comfortable with ambiguity and contradiction; this is the path to get the most out of any literary text. (It's okay to ask questions instead of providing firm answers on a symbol's significance.)

IT'S OKAY TO SORT OF PUT YOUR OWN SPIN ON IT.

Citation format is: (chapter.page.panel). So chapter 2, page 3, panel 4 would be (II.3.4). And chapter 7, page 12, panel six would be (IX.12.6).