**Sample literary analysis for *Julius Caesar***

Analyze the following passage for diction, detail, imagery, tone, etc. and explain how these literary devices contribute to the understanding of how Titinius views the loss of Cassius and the future of Rome.

Titinius: No, this was he, Messala,

But Cassius is no more. O setting sun,

As in thy red rays thou dost sink to night,

So in his red blood Cassius' day is set.

The sun of Rome is set. Our day is gone;

Clouds, dews, and dangers come; our deeds are done.

Mistrust of my success hath done this deed.

**Remember!** In your essay you must answer **ALL** parts of the prompt! That means that you will not only be analyzing the literary devices present in the passage, but you will also identify how Titinius feels about Cassius's death and what he thinks will now happen to Rome (and how we know this via the devices).

Your paper should be comprised of the following:

Introduction + Thesis statement (answers the question - NO LISTING OF DEVICES!)

Topic sentence + body paragraph #1 (3+ quotes)

Topic sentence + body paragraph #2 (3+ quotes)

Conclusion (not as important in an ICTW)

**What is a topic sentence?**

A topic sentence is a sentence that, simply put, introduces your topic of discussion for that paragraph. It SHOULD NOT include a quote or a summarization of the plot. It SHOULD name the device you will be analyzing in that particular paragraph. THIS IS WHERE YOU LIST -NOT THE THESIS! You also need to make sure that you are tying your topic sentences back to your thesis; this means that you will not only mention the device but also how it allows for a thorough understanding of Titinius's views.

**How long should my paragraph be?**

It's a little painful that this question is still being asked more than halfway through the school year, but here goes yet another explanation. A paragraph is **NOT** four (4) sentences. At this point in the year, your paragraphs should be around ten (10) sentences each. And by sentence, I do not mean anything like the following:

**Note:** You should never, ever, ever use “strong diction” in a paper. EVER.

"Titinius calls Cassius the sun."

"Cassius was Titinius's best friend."

"Titinius mourns the loss of Cassius."

"He uses strong diction."

-Excuse me while I yawn-

Also, don't forget thaaaaat

**QUOTES DON'T STAND ALONE!**

You must embed any and all quotes you use throughout your paper.

*Bad embedding:* Titinius says, "O setting sun/...clouds, dews, and dangers come."

*Better embedding:* Titinius foresees the "dangers [to] come" as the "setting sun/...sink[s] to night," suggesting that without Cassius to lead Rome, the once civilized city will fall to the wretchedness of barbarity.

The purpose of embedding quotes is to use them within your own context, adding commentary in the sentence itself. There is no rule that says your "formula" for an essay should be quote/commentary/commentary/quote/commentary/commentary. Why not just write fluidly and combine the two?! \*gasp\*

**Remember that for a passage analysis, you analyze only the information present in the passage itself! DO NOT pull quotes from other parts of the work!**

Sample

I'm going to write about diction/imagery in body paragraph #1 and the pun in body paragraph #2; I will tie in tone throughout. Whilst analyzing the literary devices listed, I will also prove that these devices make it clear that Titinius feels that Rome doesn't stand a chance without Cassius around to lead.

**Sample thesis statement:**

Upon the death of Cassius in Act V scene iii of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, Titinius morosely mourns the loss of his best friend, ultimately comparing the situation to the earth's inevitable rotation, poignantly demonstrating Titinius's belief that with the demise of the great Cassius also comes the downfall of Rome.

**Sample topic sentence #1:**

By employing metaphorical diction often associated with terminality, and casting a reddish hue over his eulogy, Titinius effectively posits that the success of the Roman Republic and the lifeblood of strong leaders like Cassius are interdependent.

**In this paragraph, I could discuss:**

1. "setting," "sink," "night," "gone," "done" - all of these words are associated with the end of something - the end of a day, the end of a life, the end of an empire, the end of a way of life - Titinius feels that he/Rome cannot go on anymore with Cassius

2. The idea of "seeing red" - "red rays" and "red blood" - the rays of the sun spread out across the sky, signifying the "death" (the end) of the day, much like Cassius's blood was spreading out across the ground, signifying that the world was coming to an end (Titinius's world would have been Rome, not the entire world as we know it) - how do you survive the end of civilization?

3. "O setting sun" - Cassius as the sun who brings light to the world but must one day "sink to night," leaving nothing but "[c]louds, dews, and dangers" - without the warmth and protection of the sun (Cassius), the world (Rome) will fall to darkness and despair

Tone throughout: hopeless, sorrowful, emotional

**Sample topic sentence #2:**

Through the thought-provoking use of a carefully placed pun, Titinius laconically postulates the severe ramifications of the death of Cassius on the doomed city of Rome.

**In this paragraph, I could discuss:**

"The sun of Rome is set." - pun on sun/son

sUn of Rome = what gave the city life, vibrancy - without the sun to give Rome warmth, it cannot survive - with the "setting [of the] sun" comes the "dangers" of the night

sOn of Rome = how the city was able to thrive - honor/nobility of Cassius - Rome had not known Cassius's equal ("Our day is gone.") - without a great leader, Rome will inevitably fall

(This should be interesting/unique enough to expand into a full paragraph without trying to look for any more puns - there are no more in this passage anyway)

**Conclusion:**

I understand that 45-ish minutes is not very many, and for that reason, I don't bring your grades down for a not-so-great conclusion. All I'm really looking for is a two sentence paragraph. The first sentence should sum up your paper as a whole - **BUT DO NOT JUST WRITE YOUR THESIS AGAIN!** The second sentence should provide insight into the larger context, i.e. what is the irony of the situation discussed above? Does Rome really fall with Cassius?

Don’t forget: You do not need to use “big” words throughout your essay. If you don’t use it on a regular basis, don’t just throw it in your paper – it will sound silly, and you probably won’t use it correctly. Use a thesaurus *thoughtfully*.