*HofD*, *TFA,* and *Orenda* essay topics:

**All essays MUST be MLA formatted**

**Due Date: Dec 14th to 18th or Jan. 14th to 18th No redo if you submit in Jan.**

1. Discuss the significance of the title for the story—*Heart of Darkness*

2. "Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in all the glories of exploration. At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look that) I would put my finger on it and say, 'When I grow up I will go there…But there was one yet—the biggest, the most blank, so to speak—that I had a hankering after."

Discuss how this passage illuminates Marlow/Conrad’s attitude toward the colonial endeavours in Africa as portrayed in *Heart of Darkness*.

3. Discuss how *Heart of Darkness* could serve as an instrument of imperialism, or argue against this same point.

5. Discuss how Conrad uses sharp contrasts in *Heart of Darkness.*

4. Critics have suggested that *Things Fall Apart* has a universal appeal. Do you agree? Explain your answer with elaborate examples from the text.

5. Although Umuofia is a patriarchal society, Achebe constantly points to the centrality of femininity in Igbo culture. In what ways does he draw attention to the fact that the feminine qualities of Igbo culture are important to its survival? Is *Things Fall Apart* a men’s story or a women’s story?

6. Achebe is very conversant with Western literature and Western literary forms. How does Achebe use the Western literary tradition to make a distinctly African statement? Is he successful in “using the master’s tools to bring down the master’s house”?

7. How can *Things Fall Apart* be read as Achebe’s answer to Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*.

8. In what ways can *The* *Orenda* be considered a response to depictions of First Nation peoples as seen in the West?

9. What role does violence play in *The Orenda*?

10. If Boyden wanted to contrast First Nation Vs European worldviews, he would only need two narratives, yet he has three. What function does Snow Fall’s narrative serve?

11. *Quill and Quire* suggests that *The Orenda* is Boyden’s attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable. To what extent is Boyden successful?

12. Explore the significance of the title.

13. In a recent interview with *The Star* Boyden suggests that it’s “difficult” to separate politics from art. How is *The Orenda* a political text?

14. “Small and isolated communities surrounded with a physical or psychological ‘frontier,’ separated from one another and from their American and British cultural sources: communities that provide all that their members have in the way of distinctively human values, and that are compelled to feel a great respect for the law and order that holds them together, yet confronted with a huge, unthinking, menacing, and formidable physical setting–such communities are bound to develop what we may provisionally call a **garrison mentality [**…] A garrison is a closely knit and beleaguered society, and its moral and social values are unquestionable. In a perilous enterprise one does not discuss causes or motives: one is either a fighter or a deserter […] In such a society the terror is not for the common enemy [....] The real terror comes when the individual feels himself becoming an individual, pulling away from the group, losing the sense of driving power that the group gives him, aware of a conflict within himself far subtler than the struggle of morality against evil.”

Frye, Northrop. "Conclusion” from *A* *Literary History of Canada*: *Canadian Literature in English*, Carl F. Klink ed(s). University of Toronto Press 1965. (830-831)

“The central symbol for Canada—and this is based on numerous instances of its occurrence in both English and French Canadian literature—is undoubtedly Survival, la Survivance. Like the Frontier (US) and The Island (England), it is a multi-faceted and adaptable idea. For early explorers and settlers, it meant bare survival in the face of "hostile" elements and/or natives: carving out a place and a way of keeping alive. But the word can also suggest survival of a crisis or disaster, like a hurricane or a wreck, and many Canadian poems have this kind of survival as a theme; what you might call 'grim' survival as opposed to 'bare' survival. For French Canada after the English took over it became cultural survival, hanging on as a people, retaining a religion and a language under an alien government. And in English Canada now while the Americans are taking over it is acquiring a similar meaning. There is another use of the word as well: a survival can be a vestige of a vanished order which has managed to persist after its time is past, like a primitive reptile. This version crops up in Canadian thinking too, usually among those who believe that Canada is obsolete”.

Atwood, Margaret. *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*. Toronto: Anansi Press 1972.

How does *The Orenda* conform to either Frye or Atwood’s notions of Canadian literary identity?

15. What role do dreams play in the novel?

16. Topics for exploration: contrasting worldviews, Missionaries in Canada, role of animals (as creatures and as names), Woman in Huron culture.

17. You pick a topic of inquiry. Have your topic approved.