SAMPLE PATTERNS FOR THESES ON LITERARY WORKS

1. In (title of work), (author) (illustrates, shows) (aspect) (adjective).

*Example: In “Barn Burning,” William Faulkner shows the characters Sardie and Abner Snopes struggling for their identity.*

2. In (title of work), (author) uses (one aspect) to (define, strengthen, illustrate) the (element of work).

*Example: In “Youth,” Joseph Conrad uses foreshadowing to strengthen the plot.*

3. In (title of work), (author) uses (an important part of work) as a unifying device for (one element), (another element), and (another element). NOTE: The number of elements can vary from one to four.

*Example: In “Youth,” Joseph Conrad uses the sea as a unifying device for setting, structure and theme.*

4. (Author) develops the character of (character’s name) in (literary work) through what he/she does, what he/she says, what other people say to or about him/her.

*Example: Langston Hughes develops the character of Semple in “Ways and Means”…*

5. In (title of work), (author) uses (literary device) to (accomplish, develop, illustrate, strengthen) (element of work).

*Example: In “The Masque of the Red Death,” Poe uses the symbolism of the stranger, the clock, and the seventh room to develop the theme of death.*

6. (Author) (shows, develops, illustrates) the theme of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the (play, poem, story).

*Example: Flannery O’Connor illustrates the theme of the effect of the selfishness of the grandmother upon the family in “A Good Man is Hard to Find.”*

7. (Author) develops his character(s) in (title of work) through his/her use of language.

*Example: John Updike develops his characters in “A & P” through his use of figurative language.*