

English 7, Fall 2006
Second Essay Assignment
Due: Tuesday, October 31

Write a short essay or story (about 1000 words, or four typed and double-spaced pages) on one of the topics indicated below. Remember that this is a critical thinking class, so cover such things as claims and assumptions, vagueness and ambiguity, and fallacies, no matter what the topic of your paper. Revise your rough draft for clarity and structure, proofread your final draft thoroughly, and be sure (for the first topic) to have an argumentative thesis or some point you are trying to make, or (for the second topic) to have a specific discussion of the logic your characters have employed. (And remember that you need to submit a copy of your paper to turnitin.com, as well as turn in a printed copy in class. Essays can only be turned in by a student attending the full class; late papers can only be turned in by prior arrangement.)

1. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the central arguments and deductions in the two of the last three stories in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* we are reading (“The Five Orange Pips,” “The Man with the Twisted Lip,” and “The Blue Carbuncle”), and then decide which story has the strongest (or weakest) basis in logic. You will want to discuss important deductions and inferences; then it will be up to you to comment on those discussions, and to support or challenge the arguments.

For this topic, try to be as specific as possible, quoting from the text when helpful so that your reader knows exactly where your interpretations originate; cite the page number parenthetically after each quotation, and use short quotations integrated into your sentences rather than long, indented ones. If you have any questions about how to quote, look for answers in your handbook from English 1A, or talk to me.

2. Write your own short story, in which the deductions and observations of Sherlock Holmes, Consulting Detective, are shown to be either strong or weak. This might be accomplished in several ways: Holmes, for example, might narrate the story, or Watson might suddenly turn clever and analytical. Whatever approach you take, however, do not lose sight of the fact that the story will be graded not on its art, but on its logic—so develop that side.

For this topic, you will need to show your familiarity with and understanding of the last three assigned Sherlock Holmes stories in other ways: by mimicking familiar habits of the characters or features of the narratives, but especially by making specific references to “previous” cases, and the logic exhibited in them, including having the characters or narrator quote from those cases. Also remember that your story must contain within itself a discussion of its own logic in terms such as we have employed in class.