

Activity 2: Why Study Literature?

Which text would you prefer to read, Text A or Text B? Why?

Text A:
400 words

Why study literature? We're sure you've asked this question many times! There are as many answers to this question as there are books. But perhaps the answer lies in the past, because literature, in a way, is older than recorded history.

People began telling stories long, long ago. Story telling was used to explain all the things that people didn't truly understand about the world and to teach way to explain the horrors and the glories of nature and to teach people how they should act and react within their world.

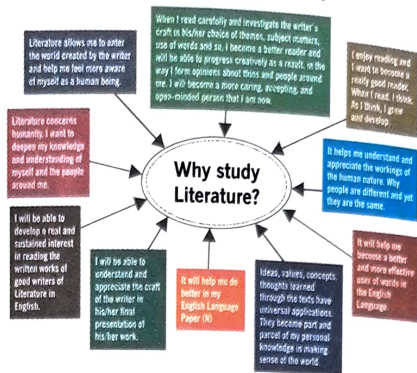
Literature today still does these same things. By studying literature, we can better understand all those things that aren't easily understood: pain, hatred, love, death, war, sacrifice, human nature, and even truth. Sure, literature may not reveal cold, hard facts about the world around us. But, like the thousands of little chips that eventually transformed a boring basic block of marble into Michelangelo's magnificent statue of David, each little nugget of understanding that we gain from literature gives us a clearer vision of life, of ourselves and of those around us. In short, by studying literature, we learn what it means to be human.

Studying literature also teaches us about how powerful language can be. A word is more than just its definition. Word choice can imply much more information than simply what is being said. How something is said or written can reveal hatred, jubilation, passion, dissatisfaction, indifference, sorrow, deceit, disbelief and so on, even while, on the surface, only transmitting the most mundane information. By studying the use of language in literature, you learn how to use the subtleties of the language to your advantage.

So, what are you waiting for? Start reading! There is an endless library of novels, plays and poems out there just waiting to enlighten you about all those experiences and emotions that we encounter along the journey of life.

Student, M. Warner

Text B: 240 words



Text A

Why study literature? We're sure you've asked this question many times! There are as many answers to this question as there are books. But perhaps the answer lies in the past, because literature, in a way, is older than recorded history.

People began telling stories long, long ago. Story telling was used to explain all the things that people didn't truly understand about the world; it taught generation after generation important life lessons. Early oral mythologies were a way to explain the horrors and the glories of nature and to teach people how they should act and react within their world.

Literature today still does these same things. By studying literature, we can better understand all those things that aren't easily understood: pain, hatred, love, death, war, sacrifice, human nature, and even truth. Sure, literature may not reveal cold, hard facts about the world around us. But, like the thousands of little chips that eventually transformed a boring basic block of marble into Michelangelo's magnificent statue of David, each little nugget of understanding that we gain from literature gives us a clearer vision of life, of ourselves and of those around us. In short, by studying literature, we learn what it means to be human.

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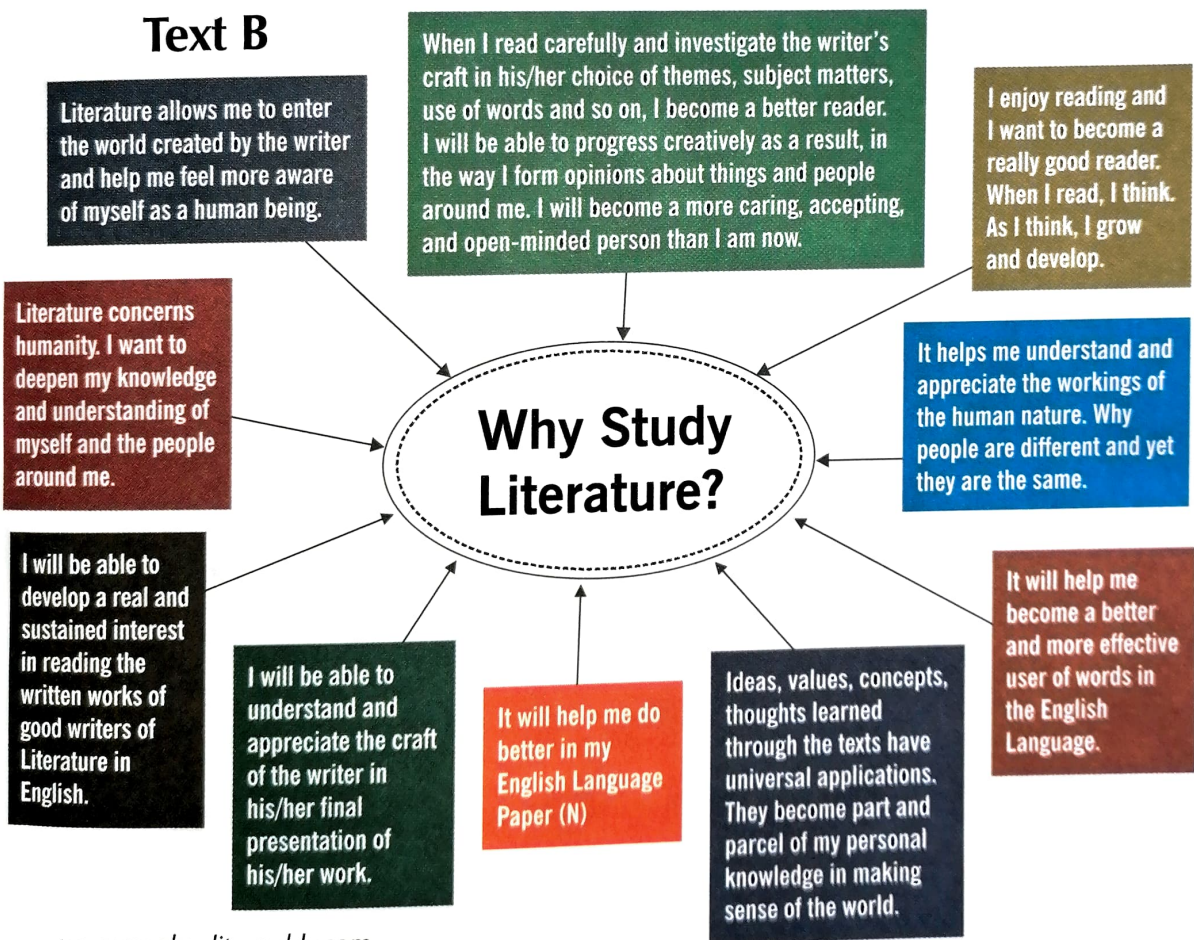
“Why do I study literature? I believe there is power in stories. Literature is both intensely personal as well as a communal experience. I love examining how words, sentences, characters, plot-lines and imagery reveal who we are as humans. Life is a complicated thing. It requires an infinite amount of words to describe and analyse. That’s the joy of studying literature - there’s always a new reality to discover.”

Student, M. Warner

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ADAPTED FROM AN ARTICLE AT www.cliffsnotes.com

Text B



www.snackonlit.weebly.com

- ◆◆ ● Decide who is going to read which Text, A or B.
- Read your text with the purpose of finding at least 8 reasons why we study literature.
- Write these reasons in **point form**. Use your own words.
- Use your notes to give your partner a convincing explanation as to why **you** study literature at school. These reasons must be important to **you**.