DRACULA ESSAY TOPICS

Directions: Read the following prompts. Select the prompt that you will be able to showcase your best thinking and writing. Be sure to follow proper essay structure, and proper MLA style in terms of quotations and the layout of the paper. Also, provide textual evidence/quotes that support your claims.

This is a formal essay. Remember to not only structure your essay appropriately, but also think analytically: explain the how and why, as well as the significance of what you say in response to the prompt.

1. The vampires in Dracula seek beauty and youth as principal objects of conquest. Why do they fixate on these two ideals? Are these twin obsessions specific to the time and place of the novel, or do we still grapple with their hold over us today? Does the author provide any positive examples of aging? In the novel, how do youth and naiveté take a back seat to knowledge and experience?
2. Bram Stoker is a master at setting tone. In Dracula, how do shifts in weather signify changes in mood?
3. In what way is the novel a recounting of a “holy war” of good versus evil? Which characters or ideas does Stoker depict as “good”? Which does he depict as “evil”? How do these characters and ideas conflict within the story?
4. Dracula was written in the Victorian Age, during which people valued bravery among men and weakness among women. How is this portrayed in the book? Are such gender roles outdated? How?
5. Write a persuasive essay in which you analyze the importance of the narrative technique of Dracula. Using textual examples (at least eight quotations from different narrators), explain how Stoker’s use of letters, journals, and diaries lends the plot of Dracula a sense of verisimilitude (truth), reinforces Gothic elements, and contributes to the meaning of the work.
6. Dracula was written in 1897, so the values and beliefs of the characters reflect this era. Cite incidents from the story illustrating the view of 1897 society on each of the following topics: women, redemption, scientific advances, and superstitions.
7. Discuss the role of dreams in Dracula.
8. Discuss Dracula’s death and whether you believe the manner of his death is consistent with earlier incidents from the story concerning vampire deaths and powers.
9. One of the thematic motifs in this story is the importance of Christian values and symbols to defeat Dracula. Define the values Stoker believes are useful in combating evil. Discuss which characters possess these values and how, using Christian symbols, these values help the protagonists defeat evil.
10. Discuss whether or not in your opinion the episodic structure of this novel adds or detracts from the story. Consider the following: How well does the story maintain the reader’s interest? Is the plot line believable? Is the plot easy to follow? Does the reader understand character(s) motivation?
11. Do you think Dracula is a religious novel? What is the significance of the role played by holy objects in warding off the vampire’s damnation? Does the author mean to satirize the piety and superstition of Transylvania town folk, or to strengthen the power of their beliefs?
12. Central to Bram Stoker’s novel Dracula is the tension between earthly life and immortality of the soul. How does Count Dracula’s aggression jeopardize his victims’ hopes for eternal rest? How do their views of death shape the ways in which Mina Harker, Dr. Van Helsing, and Arthur Holmwood confront Count Dracula’s gathering threat?
13. Describe the appearances Dracula makes throughout the novel. What does Stoker achieve by keeping his title character in the shadows for so much of the novel?