Graphic Essay (Critical) – A Long Way Gone

This graphic essay will include the same components of a formal, critical essay, but will use a more creative and visual format to present your thesis and ideas.

Requirements for the Graphic Essay:

Thesis: Your thesis statement (one sentence) will be based on one of the topics below. Your thesis needs to state what you will prove regarding the topic you choose. You will then support your thesis with your evidence (quotes/visual/analysis). The direction of your focus should be clearly stated in your thesis statement.

Remember to follow the pattern for your thesis statement:
In his short story “First Day of School”, W.O. Mitchell suggests that perceptions (genre) (Title) (author) (idea) change with experience.

Quotes: Choose three - four quotes that can be used to prove your thesis. Quotes should be short (one sentence or less), powerful, and cited with a page number. Remember a quote can be in any form taken from the text - it does not have to be a “spoken” quote).

Analysis: Provide an insightful analysis for each quote that clearly connects to your thesis. You must be able to explain why or how the “quote” proves your thesis statement is correct. Don't plot summarize. Defend the connection between the quote and the thesis statement. Each analysis should be a minimum of 3 - 4 sentences in length.

Symbol: Choose a graphic (visual) for each quote. This graphic should represent the concept(s) of the quote. In other words, it should be figurative, NOT literal.

For example: When discussing Candy’s loneliness is due to the death of the dog, choosing a dog for the symbol is literal. It represents the dog, but not the significance of the quote which is about loss of a companion that leads to loneliness.

Explanation: Provide an explanation for why you chose that particular symbol (visual).

Conclusion: Write a concluding statement that sums up your essay. It should refer back to your thesis. Include a final thought/generalization about your topic. What do you want the reader to remember about your essay based on what you presented in your thesis, quotes and visuals?

Title: You need to create an original title to represent your graphic essay (thesis).
**Guidelines for Creating the Graphic Essay:**

Once you have found all of the evidence and visuals consider the following guidelines:

- You may want to decide on an overall look that represents the novel (time period, mood, overall symbol). The entire visual should ‘fit’ this overall look.
- The thesis should in some way STAND OUT from the other written material. Perhaps it should be at the top of your page, centered, in larger lettering (sticks out) or in the middle? For example, if you are doing a poster, you may want to centre it, or use a larger font than the quotes/analysis. **Using powerpoint/keynote or photoshop is the easiest method for this assignment.**
- The organization of all of your material, much like a written essay, should follow a logical order (not pasted together haphazardly).
- Use color/font/proper spacing to help organize and make reading easier.
- The conclusion/generalization statement should also stand out in some way. This should be at the bottom/end of your essay, - similar style to your thesis statement. It must signal the end of your essay.
- BE CREATIVE!! A graphic essay is not just a poster. It is a meaningful piece of writing to express your focus on a serious topic.

**Graphic Essay Topics:**

1. Hope is a prominent theme in the novel *A Long Way Gone*. Discuss how Ishmael Beah, in spite of all the terrible events he encountered is able to find a way to overcome everything and find love and meaning to his existence again. How does hope give purpose to a person’s life when they become a victim of tragedy and violence?

2. *A Long Way Gone* is a book about people; people who hate and people who love. These people have shaped the man Ishmael is today. Discuss the people who had a profound effect on Ishmael’s life and how it made a difference to his survival.

3. Ishmael uses his memories as a means to survive and not forget who he is and where he came from. Memories help to shape us and the world we live in. Discuss how memories helped Ishmael during his journey.

4. *A Long Way Gone* is a book filled with horror but also its opposite - humanity. Discuss the amazing capacity of kindness (humanity) that lives in people, even when life isn’t kind to them.

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**Evaluation**

| Thought and Understanding: (Quality of Thesis, Analysis/ Connection of Quotes) | 5 (x3) |
| Supporting Evidence: (Quality/relevance of Quotes, Symbol, Explanation) | 5 (x3) |
| Matters of Choice & Correctness: (Vocabulary, Mechanics, Style Fits Purpose) | 5 |
| Visual Appeal (Unified Look, Pleasing to Eye, Effectively Communicates) | 5 |

**TOTAL:** 40