This essay is all about relating literature to our lives. That means utilizing themes, characterization, plot elements, and author histories, and connecting these to your life in some way, shape, or form. It’s all about examining the pieces of literature we’ve read to that point, and proving their relevance to our own experience.

By the time this paper is due we will have read pieces by:

**Ray Bradbury** ("The Pedestrian"; "There Will Come Soft Rains")
**Emily Dickinson** (the love poems; the nature poems)
**William Shakespeare** (*Much Ado About Nothing*)
**Willa Cather** (*The Professor’s House*)
**Henrik Ibsen** (*A Doll House*)
**Toni Cade Bambara** ("The Lesson")
**David Foster Wallace** ("Good People")
**Jess Walter** ("Cons")

You can use one of these pieces, or multiple pieces. You can use one theme or multiple themes. The key is relating whichever pieces and themes you’ve chosen to your own life.

Some themes and ways to connect are:

- Character back story
- Relationships with others
- Thought processes
- Character motivation
- What drives them?
- What makes them unique?
- Events
- Living with loss
- Dealing with love/lack thereof
Relevance Essay Outline

Introduction (Hook, Bridge, Thesis Statement)

 ✓ Start with an anecdotal (story) hook. This story should be a personal one from your life that you feel fits your coming thesis. OR
 ✓ Start with a quotation hook. This quote should come either from one of the authors you’ll be writing about in your paper, or from a critic of that author.

 ➢ Your thesis is your main idea. Introduce the rest of your paper here.
 ➢ List several examples from the text(s) that showcase the theme(s), the plot(s), or the author history(ies).
 ➢ These examples will lend themselves to the body paragraphs that follow.

Body Paragraphs

 ✓ Your body paragraphs should explore the aforementioned themes, the plots, or the author histories from your thesis statement.
 ✓ You need a solid topic sentence, followed by support from the literature
 ✓ You need to compare and contrast these themes, plots, and author histories to your own experience in your life.
 ✓ You can combine the support from the literature with your own experience in the same body paragraph, or you can alternate the support and how it is relevant to you in separate paragraphs.
 ✓ Remember: a paragraph is six to eight sentences in length.

Conclusion

 ✓ Do not restate the thesis statement here.
 ✓ Instead, begin your conclusion with a complementary hook (meaning whichever type of hook you began your introduction with).
 ✓ Then compare the themes from your essay to another work of fiction (it does not have to be from our class, and it can be multi-media).