

Tenth Grade
Summer 2026 Book Report 1

Sr Aisha – English

10th Grade Essay Prompt Assignment for *Murder on the Orient Express* by Agatha Christie

Due: Sept. 15th 2026

Objective:

Write an analytical essay discussing key themes, characters, or narrative techniques in *Murder on the Orient Express*. Your essay should be well-organized, clearly argued, and supported with specific examples from the text.

Essay Prompt Options:

1. Character Analysis:

Hercule Poirot, the famous Belgian detective, is central to the plot of *Murder on the Orient Express*. How does Agatha Christie portray Poirot's character? Discuss his methods of solving crimes, his personality traits, and how his role as a detective impacts the outcome of the novel. What does Poirot's character reveal about the nature of justice?

2. Theme of Justice and Morality:

The novel presents a complex exploration of justice and morality. Discuss the different views of justice presented by the characters. How does the concept of justice evolve throughout the story, particularly regarding the murder of Samuel Ratchett? What message do you think Agatha Christie is conveying about justice and the law?

3. The Role of Social Class in the Novel:

In *Murder on the Orient Express*, the social backgrounds of the characters play a significant role in the development of the story. How do social class and societal expectations influence the characters' behavior and relationships? Discuss the significance of these social dynamics in the resolution of the mystery.

4. Narrative Structure and the Role of the Detective:

Agatha Christie uses a unique narrative structure in *Murder on the Orient Express*, with

the majority of the story being told through Poirot's investigation. How does Christie use this narrative structure to build suspense and mystery? How does the reader's experience of the story change as Poirot unravels the truth?

5. **The Concept of Revenge:**

The murder of Samuel Ratchett is linked to a past crime, one in which his victim's family sought revenge. How does the theme of revenge drive the actions of the characters in the novel? Explore the moral implications of revenge as presented in the book. Do you believe the characters' actions are justified?

Guidelines for the Essay:

- **Length:** Your essay should be between 3-5 pages (750-1250 words).
- **Introduction:** Start with a brief summary of the novel and state your thesis clearly, outlining the main points you will discuss.
- **Body Paragraphs:** Each paragraph should focus on a specific point supporting your thesis. Use direct quotes from the text to back up your argument.
- **Conclusion:** Summarize your main points and reflect on the overall significance of the themes or characters discussed in your essay.
- **Citations:** Cite specific examples from the novel (page numbers) to support your claims. Use MLA or APA format for citations and references.

Total: ____ / 25

CATEGORY	5 Exemplary	4 Proficient	3 Developing	2 Beginning	1 Insufficient
Introduction & Thesis	Opening hook captures the reader immediately; introduction establishes title, author, and necessary context. Thesis is sophisticated, arguable, and previews the essay's central claim with clear stakes.	Hook engages the reader; introduction establishes title, author, and context. Thesis is clear, arguable, and specific to the text.	Hook is functional but generic; introduction names the text but offers limited context. Thesis is present but may state an obvious idea or be vague.	Hook is weak or missing; introduction lacks key context (title, author, framing). Thesis is unclear, factual rather than arguable, or buried.	No hook or introduction; thesis is missing, off-topic, or simply restates the prompt without taking a position.
Summary	Summary is brief, accurate, and woven in only as needed to support analysis. Reader understands the relevant plot without unnecessary retelling.	Summary is accurate and covers key events; mostly proportionate to analysis with only occasional unnecessary detail.	Summary is mostly accurate but at times retells the plot at the expense of analysis; minor details may be missing or off.	Summary dominates the essay or contains noticeable inaccuracies; key plot points are missing or misrepresented.	Summary is missing, severely inaccurate, or replaces analysis entirely; reader cannot follow the text being discussed.
Character Analysis	Insightful analysis of characters' traits, motivations, relationships, and development. Uses precise, well-chosen textual evidence (cited) and explores complexity, contradictions, or change over time.	Solid analysis of character traits and motivations supported by relevant, accurately cited textual evidence; some attention to development.	Identifies character traits but analysis stays at the surface; evidence is present but loosely connected or under-explained.	Describes characters without analyzing them; evidence is sparse, inaccurate, or not cited.	Characters are barely mentioned or analyzed; no textual evidence is used to support claims.
Theme	Identifies a nuanced theme expressed as a complete claim about life or human experience. Traces how the author develops it through specific literary devices (symbolism, motif, conflict, etc.) and connects it to broader meaning.	Identifies a clear theme stated as a claim; explains how the author develops it through textual evidence and at least one literary device.	Identifies a theme but states it as a topic word (e.g., "love," "power") rather than a claim; development is partial.	Theme is unclear, oversimplified, or only loosely tied to evidence; literary devices are not addressed.	No identifiable theme, or theme is unrelated to the text and prompt.
Organization & Grammar	Logical, purposeful structure (clear intro, body, conclusion); strong transitions; varied sentence structure; precise word choice; virtually free of grammar, spelling, and MLA errors.	Clear organization with effective transitions; mostly varied sentences; few minor errors that do not impede meaning.	Mostly organized but transitions are weak or formulaic; some sentence-level errors that occasionally distract from meaning.	Organization is unclear in places; frequent grammar, spelling, or citation errors interfere with meaning.	Lacks recognizable organization; pervasive grammar and mechanical errors make the essay difficult to follow.

Instructions:

1. Read the rubric and then read your partner's essay.
2. Once you've finished reading, circle where their essay falls under each category.
3. Add the points up and then give them the total grade out of 25.