

Dr. Cothran  
English 200  
Reading Response 2

Pick a topic below. Then, look through *Murder at the Vicarage*. Using quotes and examples from the text, write a **3 page, thesis-driven essay** (typed, double-spaced, in 12 point font) that expresses your views.

1. Look at the different types of detectives featured in *The Moonstone*, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, and *Murder at the Vicarage*. How does Christie's creation of a crime-solver like Miss Marple act as a real "break" with the detective novel tradition? What typical detective characters/characteristics does she keep, despite this break?
2. At one point in the novel, Miss Marple tells Colonel Melchett that she can think of at least seven people with motives to murder Colonel Protheroe. Yet Dr. Haydock describes crime as the result of "glandular secretion" (106). What does Christie say in this novel about the things that cause people to act out in criminal ways? Does everyone have the potential to become a criminal?
3. Discuss Christie's use of metafiction in this novel. What are the effects of playing games with the reader (instead of focusing solely on creating an imaginary world that the reader can pretend is real)?
4. Choose your own topic! Just get it approved by me beforehand.

Suggestions:

The more nuanced and detailed your discussion, the more likely you are to make a good grade. If you can, discuss a variety of comments (hopefully made by more than one character) on the topic. Some characters' views might contradict the views of other characters ... why might this be? Who do you think Christie wants us to trust? What does it mean if there are a variety of conflicting views? These are just few things you might think about!

Some advice: The evidence you provide when supporting your thesis should present not only quotations from the text (or descriptions of plot/character elements) that support your ideas but **analyses** of those quotations. Analysis means exploring the significance of a quotation. Define, discuss, and describe the quote. Explain why you have used this particular passage. How does it relate to your thesis? Don't assume that your reader will automatically see the significance of the examples you use.

Note: You are not expected or required to use outside sources when writing this essay, but if you do use them, please be sure to cite all source material using correct MLA format.