**Formal Essay Tips**

* Mention **author’s full name** in the first 1-3 paragraphs.
  + e.g. In Jandy Nelson’s novel, *I’ll Give You the Sun*, mortality and grief are major issues the characters face.
* Discuss the **author’s intent** as part of your analysis. What are they trying to do in their writing?
  + e.g. Zusak explores the element of danger and risk as he evolves Ed Kennedy’s character throughout *I am The Messenger*.
  + e.g. Nelson’s use of descriptive language illustrates Noah and Jude’s adventures and emotions in a manner that draws the reader into the circumstances of the story.
* Use **keywords/ terms** in your writing and **explanation of events:**
  + Narrative development
  + Intersecting plot elements
  + Constructing the story (narrative, plot)
  + The book examines
  + Depicts, portrays, illustrates, shows, explores
  + Central conflict, core event(s), situation of a story, climax
* Use **keywords/ concepts** when discussing **character development:**
  + Internal struggle or inner journey
  + Search for acceptance from others (or within themselves)
  + The character is on a journey of self-discovery
  + Evolution, evolve, reveal or revealed, portrayal
  + Coming of age, variety of pressures placed on the characters
  + Universal appeal that is relatable to the reader
  + Loss of innocence, rebellion of youth
  + Personal growth (development), independence
* **Key questions** to focus on in your essay:
  + What is the message of the novel (book)?
  + How does the reader relate to the characters and events?
  + Have you discussed meaning and metaphor?
  + What does the main character learn throughout the book?
  + What is the author conveying to the reader?
  + How do the characters change and evolve?
  + Have you written a question/ answer statement for one topic sentence?
  + Have you analysed plot and theme?
* Make sure you **differentiate** between **plot and theme.**
  + There are plot events and elements that are related (linked) to the theme
  + The plot is more structured compared to the theme.
  + Themes are more of the controlling idea, or the motif of the story, whereas the plot is the storyline of the story that includes what happens from start to finish.
  + Think of theme as a central topic (peer pressure, bullying, family relationships)