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)