

# Prompt & Thesis Guide: Book Essay II

## Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years a Slave*

### I. Prompt Part One: How does Solomon Northup's account describe slavery in the antebellum United States?

- This refers to how the *institution of slavery* in the antebellum – pre-civil war – south is described. Describe what the book says about this and use cited examples from the book with page numbers included to show it.

### II. Prompt Part Two: What does the book tell readers about slavery, slaveholders, and slaves?

- This refers to three things:
  1. how *slavery in practice* is described,
  2. how slaveholders are described in terms of how they behave and how they are impacted by owning people,
  3. and how slaves are described in terms of how they react to their lack of liberty and how they respond to their condition of being owned etc.
- Describe what the book says about all of this and use cited examples from the book with page numbers included to show it.

### III. Prompt Part Three: How does the book explain the sectionalism of the 1840s and 1850s?

- This refers to the Northern states versus the Southern states. The book clearly shows ways in which things were different in each section of the country. Describe what the book says about this and use cited examples from the book with page numbers included to show it.

### ***Be sure to extensively refer to the content of the book.***

- What does this mean? Each paragraph should have a Topic Sentence that makes a point about the book related to the prompt. Then for the body of each paragraph, you include a series of examples from the book - with a page number citation in parentheses for each example – that illustrate the point you made in your Topic Sentence.

Due Week 8.

### Thesis Statement example:

- While Solomon Northup's book *Twelve Years a Slave* sheds light on sectionalism and the institution of slavery in the antebellum years, it also provides a vivid portrayal of the grim realities of slavery for both slaveholders and slaves.

*(Do you see how all parts of the prompt are included in the Thesis Statement example?)*

### Outline

- In terms of the writing process, planning is the key to success! It is recommended that students create an outline based on the sections of the prompt to plan their essay before starting to write. Then, in each section of the outline, students should list examples and page numbers from the book that illustrate each point. Once the outline is full of examples, start writing!