WRITING LITERARY ABSTRACTS

Abstracts are required for BA ES students to get credit for reading they have done for their *Lektüremodul* (BAL). However, writing abstracts on what you read can generally help prepare you for your seminar discussions, paper writing, and oral exams. Rather than rereading your texts over and over, reading abstracts you have written yourself will make the texts' themes stand out and easier to "access".

Terms:

- Theme: The general issue(s) the work explores; the main message(s)
- Motif: Recurring images, actions that tend to unify a work, reinforcing the text's theme ("recurring salient thematic element")
- Style: narrative situation, poetic form, striking stylistic devices, rhyme schemes, rhetorical strategy

Follow the guidelines below to write an abstract you can use in preparation for your *Lektüremodul* or any seminar, paper, exam:

- Incorporate the text's author, title and date of first publication in the first sentence.
- Indicate which edition of the text you have read.
- Do not retell events chronologically; instead, discuss topics/themes in order of importance.
- Use a paragraph or two to explain how each theme is developed in the text.
- Put your text into literary and/or historical context: epoch (e.g. Romanticism), genre (e.g. *bildungsroman*) mode (e.g. realism), social setting.
- Use your own words.
- Avoid quotations.
- Feel free to consult secondary literature. If you do, you <u>must</u> of course acknowledge it.
- Write one or two pages (up to 800 words) for poems, short stories, a play and roughly one page per 100 pages of a book novel.
- For the *Lektüremodul*, focus on one poem or short story and just list the others you have read.

Follow academic writing conventions:

- Use 12-point, Times New Roman font.
- Use formal language (e.g., avoid abbreviations, contractions, and colloquialisms).
- Write a readable text: Write in complete sentences, develop your paragraphs.

<u>Do not hesitate to contact us if you have any further questions!</u>

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