

Name: _____

Honors American Literature: Realism Debunking Romanticism – an organizer

1. Choose your story (author, title, date):

2. Write a two sentence summary of the story – what is it about?

3. In one sentence, what is the romantic ideal debunked by your story of choice?

4. Based on your research into the romantic ideal, provide specific evidence of the existence of the romantic ideal in literature or art in the decades of 1860-1910. You NEED to quote an authority and a primary text here – someone (historian, critic, biographer, social scientist) who says the romantic ideal existed and a piece of art or a poem or a story or a play **from that time period** that proves the existence of the ideal.

5. Go back to your story of choice – prove the existence of the romantic ideal as an assumption of the characters. You need quoted material from your story that you can use to demonstrate the existence of the assumption.

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- In your story of choice, choose realistic details provided by the author which add up to a "creation of the real" that is debunking the romantic ideal. For example, in "To Build a Fire," Jack London repeats variations on how cold it is. Since cold is how nature kills the man, thus debunking the ideal, find, count, and document those moments to demonstrate HOW (stylistically – by the sheer weight of accumulated detail) the author is using the realist style to debunk the romantic ideal. Which details (diction)? Why arrange the details the way they are? What effect is created by doing so? How does that effect match up with what we believe the realists/naturalists were trying to do?

- Write an introduction to the paper that does the following: A) Introduces the topic of realism/naturalism with a definition and explanation of what the movement was about (include the idea that it was a movement partially created in response to the romantic movement. HINT – use the definitions given to you!). (B) Connects the realist/naturalist movement with your story choice (author, title). (C) Provides a thesis statement that clearly demonstrates that in your story choice, "a romantic ideal of Is debunked by the realist/naturalist author through an accumulation of realistic details of....
- the paper on these principles:
Introduction (#7)
Quick background on the story (#1 and #2 above)
Proof of the romantic ideal in the story and in history (see #3, #4, #5 above)
Explanation of how the author uses realistic details to debunk the romantic ideal to demonstrate the "reality" (#6)
Conclusion