



## Collection 5: An Age of Realism

### Unit Final: Literary Analysis Essay

**UNIT GOAL:** Write an essay that examines the ways which Post-Civil War writers and artists use elements of realism to emphasize themes in response to social change.

**PROMPT A:** According to American author Philip K. Dick, “Reality is that which, when you stop believing in it, doesn’t go away.” Review the collection’s central text *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin and other collection texts. What particular themes or central ideas does the writer want readers to recognize about reality, and why? Write an essay that reveals your understanding of Realism through an analysis of the author’s stylistic choices: including characterization, verisimilitude, and use of the vernacular. Support your analysis by citing specific evidence and examples from texts.

**PROMPT B:** Naturalist writers often characterized human beings as helpless creatures moved by forces beyond their understanding or control. Gary Arpin calls these authors “ironists” that distinguish themselves by juxtaposing human illusions with the indifference of the universe. How does Kate Chopin use features of Naturalism to reveal her novel’s theme? Support your analysis by citing specific evidence and examples from texts.

**PROMPT C:** As Barbara Kingsolver argues in her essay “Learning to Swim,” Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening* is widely recognized as one of the most important early feminist novels in American literature, due to its biting critique of gender norms in American society.

In the novel’s final scene and resolution, does Kate Chopin characterize her protagonist as a feminist hero for the cause of nonconformity or a victim of gender roles and social norms? Explain and defend your answer using specific examples and evidence from the text.

- Introduction announces subject and includes a clear thesis statement and controlling idea.
- Organize central ideas in a logically structured body that clearly develops the thesis statement.
- Use transitions to create cohesion between sections of the texts and to clarify relationships among ideas.
- Include relevant textual evidence to illustrate central ideas.
- Conclusion reviews main points and reveals insights and connections to text and topic.

