Essay questions - Test

Below is a list of the essay topics that I want you to consider. Choose FIVE from the list below to thoroughly explain. This is an at-home, open-book assessment. Each response will be given a rating of 1-5 based on support provided, fluency of language, etc.

Please write the essay topic before each of your responses. Submit to turnitin.com by ______________.

1. “In A Streetcar Named Desire, Williams traces several styles of life, each to its poetic termination: that of Blanche, that of Stanley, and that of the indifferent Stella.”

   In the light of this statement, discuss Williams’ characterization of these three figures in the play, showing what “style of life” you think each of them embodies and what kind of “poetic termination” Williams provides for each of them.

2. What do you believe Tennessee Williams is saying about human sexuality in A Streetcar Named Desire?

3. To what extent would you describe A Streetcar Named Desire as a tragedy? Consider the elements of tragedy in your response.

4. To what extent can Blanche DuBois be described as a victim in A Streetcar Named Desire?

5. Discuss the effectiveness of the title and epigraph for this play

6. Discuss Williams’ style in regards to his use of symbol and imagery.

7. How far is Stanley’s rape of Blanche a premeditated attack and how far was it precipitated by Blanche’s own behavior?

8. Blanche believes that the opposite of death is desire. How is this theme developed throughout the play?

9. Williams viewed the characters he created as “my little company of the faded and frightened, the difficult, the odd, the lonely.” Which characters from A Streetcar Named Desire are recognizable from this description?

10. Discuss the role of music and other sound effects in A Streetcar Named Desire.

11. “His plays deal consistently with a serious theme – self-pity, the persistence of memory that holds people in its grip and will not let them get on with their lives.” How can this statement can be applied to A Streetcar Named Desire?

12. How are the past and present intertwined in A Streetcar Named Desire and what is the importance of each of them?

13. Discuss the view that A Streetcar Named Desire is a play concerned with the conflict between the values of the old world and the new, and that this conflict is expressed through the battle between Stanley and Blanche.

14. Do you agree that the relationship of Blanche and Stanley, as it develops through the play, is simply one of villain and victim?

15. “The play is less a lament to the world to which Blanche was born than it is a lament for the dream of it.” To what extent do you agree with this view of the play?

16. How important are illusion and fantasy as themes in A Streetcar Named Desire?