

Our class discussion and analysis of *The Handmaid's Tale* has centered heavily on literary, thematic analysis -- for this assignment, you are invited to use our close reading skills to make more personal and creative connections. You will turn in **TWO lit logs** to help you to synthesize and process what you've read and deepen your understanding of the novel. There are four prompts -- choose any two to complete.

Each Lit Log should:

- Present your unique, insightful, specific response to the prompt - the opposite of generic
- Include evidence of close reading -- multiple direct quotes from the text (with page numbers)
- meet a target length of 750 words
- Have an engaging title
- be posted on the class Slate blog on the date it is due
- be submitted as a link on Canvas for credit

LIT LOG DUE DATES

#1 - Monday, 9/29

#2 - Monday, 10/12

(Respond to a different prompt for each deadline)

Lit Log Assignment Options

1. Track your own intellectual and emotional experience through a **close reading** of a particular section. You are encouraged to tackle sections that you have found confusing, uncomfortable, or intriguing. You can write this in first person, citing specific examples from this selection as well as other parts of the novel that connect these ideas. Your selected text can be as short as one sentence or paragraph, and should not be from one of the sections we've used as an all-class close reading.
2. Create a **visual representation** of a scene or a moment from the reading. Include a write-up explanation of the piece. What is your artwork about? Why did you make the choices you made to create the scene in this way? What is portrayed in your scene and why is it significant? (500 word count minimum for the artist's statement, separate from artwork)
3. Write a **reader response** journal entry. What about this selection resonates with you? What connections can you make to your own life and personal history? Cite specific examples from the selection, as well as specific stories from your life and experiences, then discuss why you react to them the way you do.
4. Even though music is entirely absent from Gilead, make a **playlist** for what you've been reading. Identify five songs that you would include as connections to specific moments, characters, motifs, or themes of the novel. For each song, write an explanation analyzing how the song connects to events in the novel using specific textual evidence to cite the novel. This submission must include an audio component: you may select to record your entire analysis including clips from the songs into a single file, or you may choose to add playable YouTube links into your Slate post. (Please do not research the Hulu show and pull from its playlist. This will bum us out and earn an automatic zero.)

Rubric for Grading (Each Lit Log is worth 20 total points)

An assignment that **exceeds expectations**:

DESIGN // Lit Log engages with the prompt in a specific, insightful way, avoiding generic and surface-level commentary.

KNOWLEDGE // All claims and evidence are accurate and text-based.

APPLICATION // Writer demonstrates “reading between the lines” of the text; close reading is evident in deep analysis.

PRESENTATION // Lit Log is the appropriate length and format, has an engaging title, and is proofread to be free of errors in grammar and mechanics.

PROCESS // Thorough evidence of your original thought and composition process -- including hand-written notes -- is included in this google doc template. (Projects without this will not be scored.)

PROCESS DOCUMENTATION -- in this box, include evidence of your mind at work: brainstormers or partial drafts in your class notebook, rough drafts of artwork, typed stream-of-consciousness while you listen to potential playlist songs, etc.

Lit Log Brainstorm

On page 72 when everyone
went at Janine and made
her cry

The wall. I think it
was one of the easiest
thing to visualize so far.
The brick, the barbed wire,
the different people on it,
were all thoroughly described

Section that you can
relate to yourself or
society

5 songs that relate to a character
or part of a story
Explain how it connects
to the text or a quote

Lit Log #1 Brainstorm

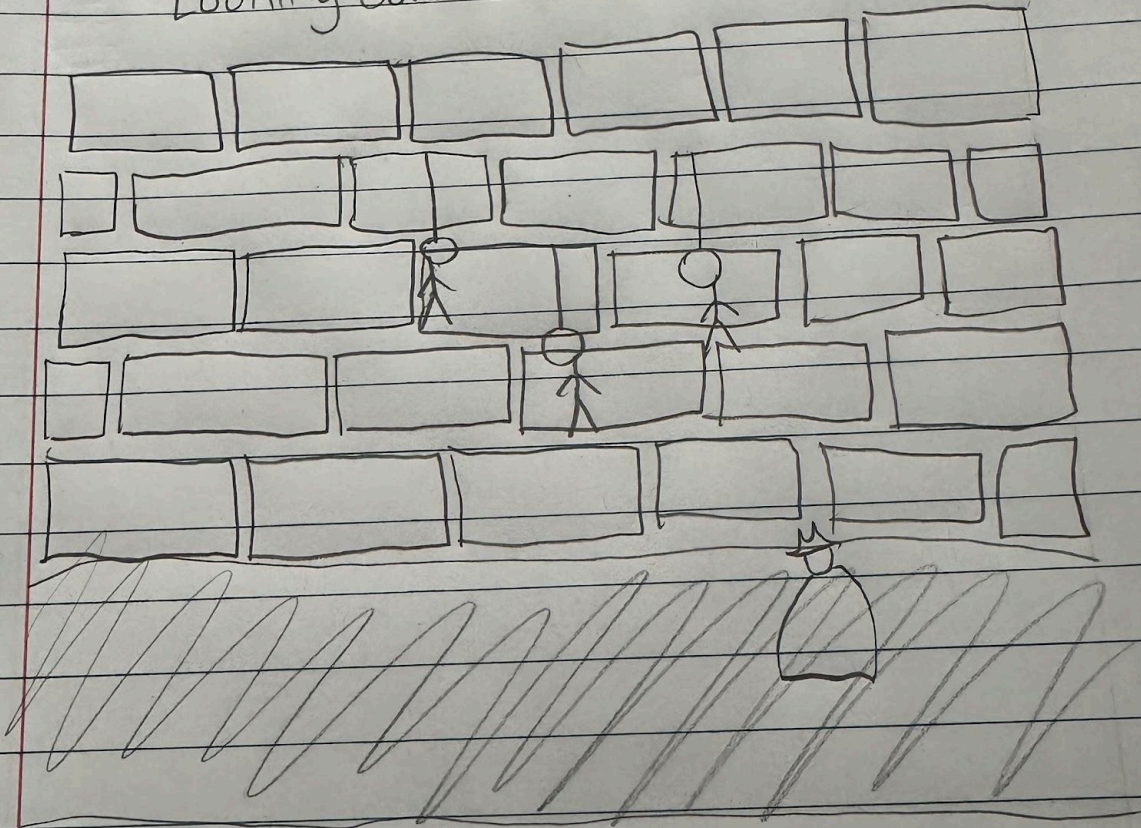
Drawing: The Wall

- Large bricks
- 3 bodies

Offred

- Looking down so she can't see the bodies

Sketch:



Writing: The Wall symbolizes control using fear, government control, and separates the people from the outside world

A Symbol of Control Through Violence and Fear

For my first Lit Log, I chose to draw a picture of the wall from the book and talk about what its purpose is in *The Handmaid's Tale*. I drew what I thought it looked like based on the description. In Chapter 6, we get our first look at the Wall, and Offred gives us an idea of what it looks like. "Now we turn our backs on the church and there is the thing we've in truth come to see; the Wall. The Wall is hundreds of years old too; or over a hundred, at least. Like the sidewalks, it's red brick, and must once have been plain but handsome. Now the gates have sentries and there are ugly new floodlights mounted on metal posts above it, and barbed wire along the bottom and broken glass set in concrete along the top." (31) In my drawing, I put all of the focus into the actual wall and not the stuff on top.

On the wall, I gave it huge red bricks. I always imagined the handmaids being small compared to even one brick. I did this because it represents how closed off the place is and how hard it is to get out. As a handmaid, you are pretty much powerless. The large bricks show how much more powerful the government is than them, and it's telling them they can never escape. I also drew three bodies like the three people Offred saw on the wall.

In *The Handmaid's Tale*, the Wall is a symbol of control using fear to keep people in line. The Wall is described as a place where the bodies of the people who break the rules are shown to the public. This acts as a constant reminder of the government's power and what will happen if you try to go against it. The wall is used to control the thoughts and behavior of the people in Gilead.

The Wall represents how the government is able to control people by using fear. By showing everyone the consequences of breaking the rules, the government makes sure that people understand what will happen if they try to break the rules. Offred walks by the wall sometimes and sees bodies hanging from the Wall with signs on them that say what they did. The punishments aren't hidden or kept secret, but they're made public, because the government wants people to see them. "We stop, together as if on signal, and stand and look at the bodies. It doesn't matter if we look. We're supposed to look: this is what they are there for, hanging on the Wall, for this purpose." (32) The Wall uses death as a warning to people to force them to follow the rules out of fear of what will happen if they don't.

The Wall also symbolizes separation. Outside of the Wall is freedom, but inside, the people are closed off from that part of the world. Offred remembers how the world used to be before, and the Wall is constantly reminding her of how much her life, and everyone else's life, has changed.

The handmaid in this drawing is Offred. I tried to draw her head tilted down slightly but enough so that she wouldn't be able to see the Wall, or rather the people on it, from where she is walking. The drawing shows Offred in the beginning of the book when she first sees the wall, because she's not used to the violence yet. The Wall also shows how violence can become normal if it's shown over and over again. Offred becomes numb to seeing the bodies on the Wall over time because she is constantly seeing the bodies.

I'm not an artist, but overall I think I did a good job at showing how impossible escape feels and how people react to violence when it's not normalized.

Drawing:

