

## **Sample of Literature Essay on Linguistics**

### **On the American Dead in Spain by Ernest Hemingway.**

The text is a short story by Ernest Hemingway, American author belonging to the “Lost Generation”. He is known for his “telegraphic style”, preferring short, simple sentences devoid of picturesque epithets and metaphors. He avoids synonyms, generally using one word for every single notion throughout the text, creating the effect of repetition and emphasizing the meaning of that notion. This text is a characteristic example of Hemingway’s prose. It can be roughly divided into three parts.

In the first one, the author describes the graveyard of American volunteers who died during the Spanish Civil War, concentrating on the landscape, the river, the forest with the imprint of war on them (lower branches were cut to cover tanks), and the earth itself. What is most important, it is winter: the coldness of death is paralleled by the coldness of physical temperature.

The third paragraph has transitional character: In the first two paragraphs only Present and Past tenses are used, while in the third one Future tenses are prevalent, indicating more hopeful and cheerful notes. The tone of narration, as well as physical background, changes: it is spring, the earth comes back to life and, the author stresses, the dead feel it, because they have become one with the earth of Spain, and the earth can never die.

The author’s intonation, already optimistic in the second part, grows steadily more and more solemnly joyous in the third one. Hemingway uses oxymoron to emphasize the importance of what he says: *“as long as all our dead live in the Spanish earth... no system of tyranny ever will prevail”*. He believes that these deaths have not been in vain, that the American dead sleeping in Spain will forever serve as the sign of struggle and will lead the Spanish to victory. The final words of the text reflect the very first phrase that the dead sleep. In the end Hemingway says that those who died there have achieved immortality, contraposing these two opposite notions: death and immortality.

It is characteristic of Hemingway to repeat the words that carry considerable symbolic meaning many times. In this text these words are “dead” and “earth”. It becomes even more interesting when we understand that finally the two become one, acquiring some new quality. The earth is not really the earth without the flesh of heroes strengthening it; and the dead do not achieve immortality unless they are unified with the earth by dying for it.