What’s Eating Gilbert Grape Project

In this film we see a loving-but-dysfunctional family in a small Midwestern town trying to cope with the necessary changes brought about by normal development (as in Erikson) after the suicide of the family father...and failing in this attempt.

DIRECTIONS
Fill in each box with a paragraph answering each question. Save this document to a flash drive and email me the finished paper using my blog. <http://richhistory.weebly.com/chapter-4-adolescence.html>

A.  Using your notes on Erikson, describe the developmental tasks that each of the family member is struggling with **at the time the movie takes place**. Talk about earlier crises or failures in development for each character that may have made the current tasks harder.

\*One hint to look at that you may have missed in the movie.  Ellen is 15 and the father, Albert, died 17 years ago, when Arnie was newborn and struggling to live.  What does this do to Amy and to the mother's reputation in town?

Momma (mid 40’s)

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Gilbert  (26)

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Arnie  (18)

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Amy  (23)

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Ellen  (15)

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B. How is Gilbert’s responsibility and personality described by other characters?  What do you think of Gilbert and his feelings about his lot in life?

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C.  Gilbert and Becky are trying to form a relationship in this film.  What are the characteristics we see in Becky that help Gilbert with this important task?

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D.  What is Becky’s feeling about change and taking risks and how does this attitude on her part benefit Gilbert, Arnie and even Momma?  Use specific examples from the film to support your position.

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E.  What do we see in Arnie?  What is his value to the family structure?

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F.  Look at the Pendulum of Emotion and four of the characters from this film (Gilbert, Becky, Betsy and Mr. Carver).  Come up with specific examples of how they handle strong emotional reactions with each other and describe what you think is going on.

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G.  How do you interpret the way the movie ends? (…the funeral pyre and splitting up of the pairs of children)  What are your feelings about the future for these characters?

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\*\*Don’t worry about polishing the form of the writing for this assignment.  These are your **notes** for writing the paper, and I am looking for clarity and depth of thinking, but not expecting you to have a theme fully developed yet for writing about the characters you will choose.

These notes are due on 10/18 and the Paper is due 10/25.