Interpretive Essay

There is a fragment of the short story *Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka in front of you. The required form of the essay is the completed unit (introduction, body and conclusion). Make sure your school essay is grammatically correct. Pay attention to the spelling. The essay should have 400-600 words.

In any case, no one paid him any attention. The family was all caught up in the violin playing. The lodgers, by contrast, who for the moment had placed themselves, their hands in their trouser pockets, behind the music stand much too close to the sister, so that they could all see the sheet music, something that must certainly bother the sister, soon drew back to the window conversing in low voices with bowed heads, where they then remained, worriedly observed by the father. It now seemed really clear that, having assumed they were to hear a beautiful or entertaining violin recital, they were disappointed, and were allowing their peace and quiet to be disturbed only out of politeness. The way in which they all blew the smoke from their cigars out of their noses and mouths in particular led one to conclude that they were very irritated. And yet his sister was playing so beautifully. Her face was turned to the side, her gaze followed the score intently and sadly. Gregor crept forward still a little further and kept his head close against the floor in order to be able to catch her gaze if possible. Was he an animal that music so seized him? For him it was as if the way to the unknown nourishment he craved was revealing itself to him. He was determined to press forward right to his sister, to tug at her dress and to indicate to her in this way that she might still come with her violin into his room, because here no one valued the recital as he wanted to value it. He did not wish to let her go from his room any more, at least not as long as he lived. His frightening appearance would for the first time become useful for him. He wanted to be at all the doors of his room simultaneously and snarl back at the attackers. However, his sister should not be compelled but would remain with him voluntarily; she would sit next to him on the sofa, bend down her ear to him, and he would then confide in her that he firmly intended to send her to the conservatory and that, if his misfortune had not arrived in the interim, he would have declared all this last Christmas (had Christmas really already come and gone?), and would have brooked no argument. After this explanation his sister would break out in tears of emotion, and Gregor would lift himself up to her armpit and kiss her throat, which she, from the time she started going to work, had left exposed without a band or a collar.

Guidelines for writing an essay:

- Put the fragment in the context of the short story and right historical and literary works.
- Explain the meaning of the title, and determine the subject of the fragment.
- Write something about the character of Gregor Samsa according to the entire work. What does this fragment say about the main character?
- Explain the sense of the rhetorical question: *Was he an animal that music so seized him?* in the context of the short story.
- Explain the spiritual metamorphosis of Gregor Samsa's family.
- What is the relationship between Gregor and his family after the metamorphosis?
- Explain Kafka's technique referring to the „magical that seizes to amaze anyone“.
- How are human life and family relations portraited according to this short story?