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**Typed Final Essay Due:**

**Thursday, March 13, 2014**

*To Kill a Mockingbird* Thesis Statements

Essay Writing Checklist (6 Steps):

1. **Choose topic**
2. **Write thesis statement**
3. Outline supporting ideas
4. Gather evidence/brainstorm analysis
5. Complete introduction, body, and conclusion
6. Publish in MLA format

Choose one of the following prompts below to guide your essay.

1. Atticus teaches his children not to judge others until they have “climbed into other people’s skin and walked around.” Why is it so difficult for other people in our society (past and present) to adopt this idea? Why do we continue to hold prejudices against others? Discuss in an essay using examples from *To Kill a Mockingbird,* from the news, from current events, or from other texts we have read.
2. Scout is expected to act a certain way because she is a girl. In a well-developed essay, describe the way gender expectations can have a strong impact on the people we become. What happens when we do not meet these expectations? Have these expectations changed? Use examples from *To Kill a Mockingbird,* from the news, from current events, or from other texts we have read.
3. One of the novel’s major themes is the contrast between protecting innocent people and accusing them of being guilty for something they are not. Harper Lee calls these characters “mockingbirds.” Find examples of characters from the novel that illustrate this theme. Also include examples from the news, current events, or other articles we have read that show how society still struggles with this issue.
4. Scout and Jem (in different ways) demonstrate the way our view of the world changes as we grow up and become more mature. In a well-written essay, explain the reasons why growing up can change the way that we view the world, and how this can affect our ideas of other people. Use examples from *To Kill a Mockingbird,* from the news, from current events, or from other texts we have read.

* I have chosen to write about prompt letter \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Developing a thesis statement: A thesis statement is the backbone of your essay. It can also be called a purpose statement because it explains to the reader the purpose of your essay. It is one sentence that explains exactly what the essay will be about, but also makes a claim that the rest of your essay has to prove.

**Your Purpose: To Explain and Analyze**

* It’s the author’s (your) goal to enlighten (educate) the reader with a new way to look closely at one aspect of the novel.
* Use examples from the text and your own analysis to explain why this aspect of the novel is important.
* THIS IS NOT A BOOK REPORT, AND IT IS NOT A PLOT SUMMARY.
* **Example 1:** Jem struggles to maintain his trust in humanity as he continues to encounter prejudice, hypocrisy, and injustice throughout the novel.

This is a strong thesis statement because it tells the reader what the essay will be about (Jem’s struggle to trust other people) and also makes a claim that the writer has to prove (that prejudice, hypocrisy, and injustice are the reasons why Jem is having such a hard time believing other people.) The rest of this writer’s essay is going to provide examples and analysis that prove why this thesis statement is true.

* **Example 2:** The characters in *To Kill a Mockingbird* illustrate that even when people have good intentions, their personal biases, the negative influence of people around them, and lack of education all lead to their likeliness to be more prejudiced.

This is a strong example because it shows the writer’s purpose (to explain why people can be prejudiced) and makes a specific claim that the writer will have to prove with examples and analysis from the text.

* **Example 3:** Boo Radley is a “mockingbird” because he is not guilty of being the evil, frightening man the children think he is; instead he is a timid hero and protector of the children.

This is a strong example because it shows the writer’s purpose (to explain that Boo Radley is a “mockingbird”), and it makes a claim by including why the writer believes this to be true. The writer will then include examples and analysis from the text to prove this.

* **Non-Example 1:** Prejudice is a part of *To Kill a Mockingbird.*

This is a weak thesis statement because it is not specific. There is nothing to prove because the thesis statement is so obviously true. It gives the writer hardly anything to discuss throughout the rest of his or her essay.

* **Non-Example 2:** *To Kill a Mockingbird* was my favorite book.

This is a weak thesis statement because it is simply a personal opinion. Even though the writer can continue to explain why, it is not specific enough to lead them to provide analysis. Essays should not be formed out of personal opinion, but rather well-selected facts and insightful analysis that will help the reader to see the novel in a new way.

My thesis statement: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Classmate Samples: