*To Kill a Mockingbird* – In-class Essay Assignment

After having read the novel and discussing some of the major themes at length, it is time for you to examine one of those themes in depth. Choose one of the following questions around which you will formulate and support your thesis:

1. **What is the most important lesson Scout learns throughout the novel** and how does she change by the end of the novel as a result of this lesson? Explain your answer by examining three instances in which her understanding of the community is affected by this lesson.

2. Both *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *The Help* convey a sense of hope for the future at the end. Using examples from both texts, **discuss how there is hope for the future in both these societies.** (Avoid “if” statements and only focus on the people who have an impact on and are changing their societies at the time of the story.)

3. **Discuss Atticus as a parent and role model for his children focusing on 3 specific events**. (Some ideas to consider when formulating a thesis: How do these two roles come together in Atticus’ character? Is he a good role model and parent? What flaws does he have and how does he make up for these flaws through his parenting and role modeling? How does he consciously attempt to be both?)

**Success Criteria:**

* Introduction with opening statement, link, thought-provoking thesis, direction (3 points)
* 3 body paragraphs
  + Transitional words/phrases between each
  + Specific, examples from the text
  + 9 quotations from the novel (3 per paragraph) properly integrated and cited
  + Link all ideas back to thesis statement (in concluding sentence, especially)
* Concluding paragraph with restatement of thesis, summary of points, and concluding remark

**Remember:**

* Formal language (no slang, “I”, “you”…)
* MLA formatting – for your information, citations
* Prove your thesis using specific examples – cite all quotations (Lee 32).
* Explain all ideas clearly and effectively (pretend your reader knows little about that novel)
* Don’t tell your reader what you’re doing – ~~the thesis is~~… ~~this essay will explain~~… ~~the first point is~~…

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Learning Goals | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 4 |
| I have a thorough understanding of the text  I know how to effectively use the structure of a formal essay | -ideas correctly portray the main ideas and themes in the text with limited effectiveness  -uses the formal essay structure, but some parts are missing or do not work | -ideas correctly portray the main ideas and themes in the text with some effectiveness  -uses the formal essay structure, but some parts do not work effectively | -ideas correctly portray the main ideas and themes in the text with considerable effectiveness  -uses the formal essay structure, but could use more effectively | -ideas correctly and effectively portray the main ideas and themes in the text  -uses the formal essay structure effectively |
| I have many thought-provoking ideas that all work towards supporting my thesis | -thesis is somewhat present, but is lacking something significant  -points related to topic, but do not properly support thesis  -includes quotations and specific examples that support points with limited effectiveness | -thesis is present, but is simplistic  -points demonstrate thesis  -includes quotations and specific examples that support points | -thesis is insightful  -points are well-chosen and demonstrate thesis  -includes well-chosen, quotations and specific examples that support points | -thesis is thought-provoking and insightful  -points are well-chosen and effectively demonstrate thesis  -includes well-chosen, revealing quotations and specific examples that support points effectively |
| I can convey my ideas clearly in writing  I can write for an academic audience | - explains how examples and quotations support the thesis with limited effectiveness  -many spelling and grammatical errors that impact understanding of essay  -quotations are rarely integrated into sentences  -uses a lot non-academic language | -somewhat explains how examples and quotations support the thesis  -many spelling and grammatical errors  -quotations are integrated into sentences with some errors  -uses mostly formal diction appropriate to an academic audience | -clearly explains how examples and quotations support and prove the thesis  -some minor spelling and grammatical errors  -quotations are integrated into sentences with few minor errors  -uses formal diction appropriate to an academic audience | -clearly and effectively explains how examples and quotations support and prove the thesis  -few or very minor spelling and grammatical errors  -quotations are effectively integrated into sentences  -uses formal, elevated diction appropriate to an academic audience |
| I know how to cite my sources correctly using MLA formatting | -uses MLA format correctly with many major errors | -uses MLA format correctly with some errors | -uses MLA format correctly with a few minor errors | -uses MLA format correctly with no errors |
| Learning Skills: | Responsibility: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | Organization: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |  |  |

Essay Outline

*Introduction*

|  |
| --- |
| Hook/ general intro to your topic:  Link to novel (mention title and author):  Thesis and direction: |

*Body*

|  |
| --- |
| Transition:  **Paragraph 1 – topic:**  Transition:  Point 1 –  Proof 1 –  Explanation 1 –  Transition:  Point 2 –  Proof 2 –  Explanation 2 –  Transition:  Point 3 –  Proof 3 –  Explanation 3 –  Transition:  Concluding Sentence: |
| Transition:  **Paragraph 2 – topic:**  Point 1 –  Proof 1 –  Explanation 1 –  Transition:  Point 2 –  Proof 2 –  Explanation 2 –  Transition:  Point 3 –  Proof 3 –  Explanation 3 –  Transition:  Concluding Sentence: |
| Transition:  **Paragraph 3 – topic:**  Point 1 –  Proof 1 –  Explanation 1 –  Transition:  Point 2 –  Proof 2 –  Explanation 2 –  Transition:  Point 3 –  Proof 3 –  Explanation 3 –  Transition:  Concluding Sentence: |

Conclusion

|  |
| --- |
| Transition:  Restate thesis –  Summary of points –  Closing remark – |