

The Character Analysis Essay

Assignment: Your task is to write a five paragraph character analysis essay about a character from a piece of literature. Once you have chosen a character to analyze, choose **three** adjectives or descriptive phrases which you can apply to the character – these are traits that the character possesses. **You will organize the body of your essay around these three traits.**

Introduction: In this first paragraph, you will introduce your character. Be creative. Use an anecdote, a telling quote or incident from the play, or a summary of how the character changes throughout the play to engage your reader. Remember: your first line must be interesting! Your introduction should be roughly 5-6 good sentences.

Thesis Statement: This sentence is the last sentence of your introductory paragraph. This sentence will inform the reader what he or she will read in your essay. The thesis should include the character's name and the 3 adjectives.

MODEL THESIS: Throughout the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Jem Finch evolves from a child to adolescent by becoming more mature socially, more enlightened about the world around him, and more brave from personal experiences.

This is a good thesis because the reader knows the first body paragraph will show how Jem becomes more mature based on his social interactions, the second will demonstrate how he becomes enlightened based on what is happening in his "world", and the third demonstrates the bravery he gains from experiences throughout the novel. Also, the descriptors are vivid and apt for the character.

BAD THESIS: In this essay, I will show you how Jem is spoiled, stubborn, and childish.

Remember, never write "in this essay" or "you" in formal compositions. Not to mention, these adjectives are weak – you can do better!

Body Paragraph #1: Your topic sentence includes the first adjective listed in your thesis statement to describe your character. You will support that topic sentence with 2 examples from the book and 1 quote. Your quote must be cited in MLA format. Make sure you explain the connection between the examples and the adjective. This paragraph should be 6-8 good sentences in length.

Body Paragraph #2: Your topic sentence includes the first adjective listed in your thesis statement to describe your character. You will support that topic sentence with 2 examples from the book and 1 quote. Your quote must be cited in MLA format. Make sure you explain the connection between the examples and the adjective. This paragraph should be 6-8 good sentences in length.

Body Paragraph #3: Your topic sentence includes the first adjective listed in your thesis statement to describe your character. You will support that topic sentence with 2 examples from the book and 1 quote. Your quote must be cited in MLA format. Make sure you explain the connection between the examples and the adjective. This paragraph should be 6-8 good sentences in length.

All body paragraphs need to have a topic sentence, transitions into your evidence of the characteristic, evidence to support your claim, explanation of your evidence, and a concluding sentence!

Conclusion: Summarize your main points. Restate your thesis statement, but make sure you reword it. Provide some final, creative thoughts about the character. This is the last paragraph your audience reads, so make it good (5-6 sentences).

Quotation Requirements: You must include the page number of the quotation and introduce or lead in the quotation properly. For example: ***When telling about Jem's attempt to touch the Radley house, Scout tells the reader, "In all his life, Jem never declined a dare" (29).***

(Notice how I introduced the quotation, where I put the quotation marks, and how I noted the page number.) See your student handbook or MLA notes for more help.

Guidelines:

- You need an introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion.
- Your direct quotations should be no more than three lines long each.
- Use an MLA heading and page format.
- The paper must be typed; 12 point font; Times New Roman; one inch margins; double-spaced.
- You must have a *Creative Title*. "Character Analysis", "Jem", or something to that effect does not work.
- Include a Works Cited page to coincide with your in-text citations.

Writing Tips You Must Follow (or lose points): Check and double-check your paper.

- Avoid contractions (can't, won't, etc.) unless in a quotation.
- Don't use slang or common words (thing, stuff, etc.), unless in a quotation.
- Write only in third person. Don't use "you" or "I."
- Do not underline or put your title in quotations.
- Use sentence variety (simple, compound, complex).
- Use specific, vivid, and detailed incidents and examples to support your thesis.
- Fix all comma splice errors, run-ons, and sentence fragments.
- Run spell check, but remember that it won't catch the wrong use of words (hear/here).
- Write in all present tense. Books never "end" – they continue on for a new reader.
- Fix all typing errors.
- Make sure all paragraphs are indented a half an inch.
- Do not use "get" or "got." Use stronger verbs!