

To Kill A Mockingbird - Literary Analysis

Assignment: Write a 1,000-1,250 word literary analysis on the novel *To Kill A Mockingbird*. This should be a persuasive essay with a strong argument supported by details from the text. Follow MLA essay guidelines, including the use of parenthetical citations. You will upload a copy of your analysis to Turnitin and Dropbox.

Prompts: You may choose from the prompts below or you may come up with one of your own. If you would like to create your own prompt, you must email it to me for approval!

Local Color. What role does local color play in the novel? How does Lee's use of local color help develop the major themes of the novel?

Themes. What are the big ideas or themes of *To Kill a Mockingbird*? Consider what the novel teaches about justice, prejudice, courage, attitudes towards those who are different from us, race relations, etc. Choose one theme.

Coming of Age. Both Jem and Scout Finch come of age in this novel. Describe how either Jem or Scout changes from the beginning to the end of the novel by analyzing at least three significant "growing up" moments. Be sure to explain why these moments are significant.

Walking in skin. Atticus believes that the only way to truly understand a person is to walk around in their skin. Examine this idea as it plays out through the characters and events of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Analyze several instances where the children learn valuable lessons about life by seeing the world from another person's perspective.

Race in the South. Not only does race divide the town of Maycomb, it also dictates the ways in which characters conduct themselves in relationships. What are the hidden rules of conduct the people of Maycomb follow because of race? How does race structure relationships in terms of power, language, and social status? Lastly, is Harper Lee challenging the status quo about race relations through *To Kill a Mockingbird* (is her novel political?) or is she merely describing life as it is in Maycomb?

Courage. Harper Lee suggests that real courage is the ability to stand up for what you believe in. In an organized and supported essay, explain how the children's (Scout's and Jem's) ideas about courage change throughout the novel, beginning with what they consider to be courage and showing how that evolves to the point where they finally come to understand that real courage is standing up for what is right despite the risks or sacrifices of doing so.

Due Dates:

Thesis – Week 4, Friday (sent via email)

Rough Draft – Week 6, Monday (hard copy in class for peer review)

Final Paper – Week 7, Monday, (upload PDF to Turnitin AND Dropbox)