**English I Honors**

**To Kill a Mockingbird: Argument Essay Assignment**

You will write a culminating argument essay to conclude your study of To Kill a Mockingbird. Choose ONE of the following essay prompts and outlines to work with.

1. **Is Maycomb ultimately “good” or ultimately “bad” in terms of community?**
	1. Suggestions for essay structure:
		1. Intro: Define community, define “good” community, define “bad” community, include first supporting quote
		2. Body: Discuss in terms of TKaM and supplemental texts
		3. Conclusion: Make and refute a counterclaim, make last connection to supplementals or other, include supporting quote
2. **Who is the quintessential “mockingbird” –in TKaM and/or universally?**
	1. Suggestions for essay structure:
		1. Intro: Define and discuss symbolism, include “it’s a sin to kill….” quote and analyze quote, discuss the idea of “mockingbirds” in society and in general (historically or culturally, who has been a “mockingbird”?)
		2. Body: Discuss and define symbolic mockingbirds in TKaM and supplemental texts, providing evidence for why/how
		3. Conclusion: Make and refute a counterclaim, make last connection to supplementals or other, include supporting quote
3. **Who is the most effective narrator of this story, and how does Harper Lee’s diction and style contribute to your choice?**
	1. Suggestions for essay structure:
		1. Intro: Discuss what IS the point of view in TKaM, discuss generalized effects of POV and the different types of POV there are, and how the effect on the story/narration changes; Discuss Scout’s innocence and/or loss of it🡪 generally how that affects the narrative
		2. Body: Discuss Lee’s style and diction in TKaM, juxtaposed or in conjunction with style/diction/narration of supplementals, etc; discuss how the incorporation of figurative language affects the narration
		3. Conclusion: Make and refute a counterclaim, make last connection to supplementals or others, include supporting quote
4. **In the end, does Atticus actually make a difference in his kids or in Maycomb?**
	1. Suggestions for essay structure:
		1. Intro: Discuss/define unlikely and everyday heroes/heroism, how Atticus embodies Moral Courage throughout novel by his actions, pull quotes from supplemental texts that illustrate this idea as well
		2. Body: Discuss this theme in TKaM and in supplemental texts, providing concrete quotes/evidence for why and/or why not
		3. Conclusion: Make and refute a counterclaim, make last connection to supplementals or others, include supporting quote
5. **Does Harper Lee deliver an effective historical or political/advocacy societal message through To Kill a Mockingbird? Why or why not?**
	1. Suggestions for essay structure:
		1. Intro: Discuss/define historical criticism/political criticism, why it is appropriate to examine TKaM in this way, what events either from history or the novel lend itself to this way of thinking about the book, incorporate quote from either TKaM or supplementals that illustrate these ideas; explain what the societal message is
		2. Body: Discuss specific examples from TKaM that illustrate the message you claim Lee is sending; concretely connect these specific events to historical/political influences; explain why the message is strongly and/or effectively evidenced by the events in the novel, etc.
		3. Conclusion: Make and refute a counterclaim, make last connections to supplementals and historical/political influences, include a last supporting quote from novel or elsewhere

**Additional Requirements:**

1. Must have clear, organized Introduction, Body, and Conclusion
2. No 1st person
3. Minimum of **THREE** evidential quotes from To Kill a Mockingbird to support your argument
4. Minimum of **TWO** additional evidential quotes from SUPPLEMENTAL texts to support your argument
5. MUST include correctly formatted MLA parenthetical citations
6. MUST include correctly formatted MLA Works Cited page
7. Must adhere to grammar and conventions of Standard English

**\*ANY and ALL feedback from previous essays is to be used to improve your writing on this one\***

**\*ANY written instruction, guidelines, advice given this year must be applied to this essay\***

**\* The introductory paragraph must include the title (*To Kill a Mockingbird*), the author (Harper Lee) and a brief synopsis of the novel. In other words, introduce the novel. This should potentially be the first sentence of your essay\***

**Making claims, making counterclaims, and refuting counterclaims:**

**Your CLAIM will be your THESIS STATEMENT.**

**Where should this appear? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

* **What’s a Counterclaim?**

**It is when you recognize the other side of the debate in order to strengthen your own argument.** In other words, it’s the thesis making the OPPOSITE (aka: counter) point.

* **What’s a Refutation?**

***Refute*** means to prove wrong.

Refutation is **saying why the counter argument is wrong** (or not AS right as your thesis).

**Sample counterclaim sentence starters:**

*While it is true that…*

*Although the argument stands that…*

*Admittedly,…*

*It could be argued that…*

**Sample refutation sentence starters:**

*However, that point is not valid because…*

*Transition words: but, yet, however, nevertheless, still*

*While that may be the case, (my thesis) is still more effective because…*

*However, the fact remains that…*

*© 2015 Shannon Townes and Nathan Sloan*