

# Engl 2332 Character Analysis Essay Guidelines

**Assignment:** You will write a five + paragraph **character analysis essay** about a character from a piece of literature we have read up to this point. Once you have chosen a character to analyze, choose three distinct character traits that will be discussed in your paper. Organize the body of your essay around these three traits.

## INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

In this first paragraph, introduce the character. Use a telling quote or incident from the short story or a summary of how the character changes throughout the selection. The introduction should be roughly 5-6 good sentences, followed by the **THESIS STATEMENT**.

### THESIS STATEMENT

This sentence is the last sentence of the introductory paragraph. This sentence will inform the reader what he or she will read in the essay. The thesis should include the character's name and the 3 specific things that will be discussed in the body of the paper.

#### MODEL THESIS:

**Throughout the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee, Jem Finch evolves from a child to an adolescent by becoming more mature socially, more enlightened about the world around him, and braver due to his personal experiences.**

**This is a good thesis** because the reader knows the first body paragraph will discuss 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 body paragraph will illustrate the bravery he gains from experiences throughout the novel.

#### MODEL BAD THESIS:

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

**This is a bad thesis** because the writing is NOT on a college level. Also, it is really bad.

## BODY PARAGRAPHS

All body paragraphs need to have a topic sentence, transitions into the evidence of the characters discussed, evidence to support your claim, an explanation of your evidence, and a concluding sentence.

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

**Body Paragraph #2:** Your **topic sentence** includes the **second** item listed in your thesis statement to discuss about the character. You will support that topic sentence with **examples from the selection and one direct quote**. Your quote must be cited in MLA format. Make sure you explain the connection between the examples and the item you listed in your topic sentence. This paragraph should be 6-8 good sentences in length.

**Body Paragraph #3:** Your **topic sentence** includes the **third** item listed in your thesis statement to discuss about the character. You will support that topic sentence with **examples from the selection and one direct quote**. Your quote must be cited in MLA format. Make sure you explain the connection between the examples and the item you listed in your topic sentence. This paragraph should be 6-8 good sentences in length.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Summarize your main points, **BUT do not add any new information**. Restate your thesis statement using different wording. Bring your essay to a recognizable conclusion.

### **USING QUOTATIONS:**

Remember, a quotation is not simply a character speaking. It can be, but it is some of the author's words inserted into your paper to provide evidence.

{Normally, MLA formatting requires the citation to include the page number of the quotation. However, many of our stories online have not provided us with page numbers.}

**Be sure to introduce or lead in the quotation properly.**

**EXAMPLE:** When describing Jem's attempt to touch the Radley house, Scout tells the reader, "In all his life, Jem never declined a dare" (29).

Notice how the quotation was introduced, where the quotation marks belong, and the page number is cited. See online MLA formatting for more help.

## **GUIDELINES:**

1. You need an introduction, a minimum of three body paragraphs, and a conclusion
2. Your direct quotations should be no more than 2-3 lines long each
3. Use an MLA heading and page format
4. The paper must be typed; 12-point font; Times New Roman; one-inch margins; double-spaced.
5. You must have a title
6. Include a Works Cited page to coincide with your in-text citations

## **Writing Tips to Follow:**

- Avoid contractions (can't, won't, etc.) unless in a quotation
- Do not use slang or common words (thing, stuff, etc.), unless in a quotation.
- Write only in the 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 will not catch the wrong use of words (hear/here)
- Write in all present tense. Literature never "ends" – it continues on for a new reader
- Fix all typing errors
- Make sure all paragraphs are indented a half an inch
- Use strong verbs
- Check and double-check your paper
- "Short Stories" are in quotation marks; *Books and Novels* are italicized