

Character Essay Assignments & Instructions

ESSAY PROMPT

Write a character analysis essay based on one of the dynamic characters listed below. A strong analysis will identify the character's personality, behavior, and/or other qualities, address the character's place within or effect on the story, and provide insightful commentary about the character.

Martha Hale

Mrs. Peters

Minnie (Foster) Wright

"The Men"

Assignment #1 BRAINSTORM, DRAFT A THESIS STATEMENT, and CHOOSE 3 TOPICS

Brainstorm: Choose a character and create a Character Arc diagram.

Formulate an opinion about the significance of your character in relation to the story.

- Do the character's traits help him/her succeed? or produce his/her failure?
Example: *Mathilde Loisel brought about her own downfall through her many character flaws.*
- Does the character change or grow as a result of the events of the story? For better or for worse?
Example: *Sam and Bill experience positive character growth during their struggle with Johnny.*
- Is this character ideally fit (or not) to play his/her role in the story?
Example: *Sanger Rainsford is supremely qualified to defeat General Zaroff.*

Compose a thesis statement. Your thesis statement must use strong, clear wording to name the character, express your opinion about the character's role in the story, and be arguable (someone could disagree). The thesis must be only one sentence and may not contain any "be" verbs. The thesis should not mention what your 3 body paragraph topics will be – NO PRONGS.

Plan three body paragraph topics. The thesis, an overarching statement of the main idea of the entire essay, is supported by three underlying paragraph topics. These topics must be different but related.

Read your thesis statement and ask, "What are the traits of this character that support my claim?" Choose the three strongest character traits for your body paragraph topics. The following examples show how three different characteristics can support one main idea.

A fitting combination of personality and talent make the Cat in the Hat the ideal character to fill a depressing rainy day with lively chaos.

The Cat creates chaos because he is...

- #1: Acrobatic
- #2: Free-Spirited
- #3: Tenacious

In his quest to convince his friend to taste green eggs and ham, Sam finally finds success due to his character strengths.

Sam succeeds because he is...

- #1: Energetic
- #2: Creative
- #3: Persistent

Email your thesis and 3 paragraph topics to your tutor. Please copy your thesis statement and 3 topics directly into the body of your email. Do not send a document or a link to a document. Your tutor will respond to you with suggestions for improvement. It will then be your job to apply those suggestions and revise your thesis to the best of your ability.

Assignment #2 REVISED THESIS, TOPIC SENTENCES, and QUOTES

- ❖ Following the tutor feedback (emailed), revise your thesis statement.
 - ❖ Next, write a topic sentence for each of the three body paragraphs that supports the thesis.
 - ❖ Then, select 2-3 quotes that support each paragraph topic. Include citations.
 - ❖ Type your revised thesis, topic sentences, and quotes in a double-spaced, MLA-formatted document. Submit a paper copy to your tutor for grading. Do NOT upload to Turnitin.
-

Writing Topic Sentences

A topic sentence introduces the main idea of the paragraph in a single statement. Each topic sentence should focus on one character trait and broadly express how it relates to the thesis. Do not begin to add specific story details or explain your argument. Just state the topic.

Selecting Quotes

Once you have your thesis and three topic sentences about the character, ask, “Which events in the story support these three ideas?” Remember – characters are known through direct and indirect characterization such as:

- Their own words.
- Their actions.
- What other characters say about them.
- What the narrator says about them.

Select quotes from the story that strongly support each paragraph’s topic (each character trait) and prove your overall opinion about character.

Each body paragraph will require two quotes but you may find it helpful to find a third “backup” quote at this time.

Your quotes must show variety which means they must be spread throughout the story and show support for the main idea through different characters and/or events.

Document Structure

Revised Thesis

1. Topic Sentence
 - a. “Quote” (citation).
 - b. “Quote” (citation).
 - c. (optional 3rd quote)
2. Topic Sentence
 - a. “Quote” (citation).
 - b. “Quote” (citation).
 - c. (optional 3rd quote)
3. Topic Sentence
 - a. “Quote” (citation).
 - b. “Quote” (citation).
 - c. (optional 3rd quote)

Assignment #3 BODY PARAGRAPHS OUTLINE

- ❖ Following tutor feedback, revise your thesis (again) and topic sentences as required. Find new, stronger, and/or more varied quotes if necessary.
 - ❖ Then, write a full-sentence outline of your body paragraphs. (see outline structure below)
 - ❖ With a parent, work together to revise your outline until you have produced a well-edited copy that shows thoughtful argument construction and is written to the best of your ability.
 - ❖ Upload to Turnitin ONLY.
-

Body Paragraph Outline Reminders:

- Type and underline the fully revised **thesis statement** above your first paragraph.
- Write in **complete sentences**.
- **Topic Sentences** should focus on one character trait and how it relates to the thesis.
- **Assertions** (claims) must expand or elaborate on the topic with BOTH an arguable claim AND story context that sets up the quote. Keep the story context short, focus on your claim.
- **Evidence** (quotes) must be blended with an intext citation. Avoid basic introductions such as “The author writes,” or “Bill says,” and instead use your quote blends to strengthen your evidence.
- **Commentary** (explanation) must clearly defend how the example from the story (evidence) proves your assertion and supports your topic. Commentary is not about proving that the character has the particular trait. It is about proving how the trait affects the character’s place in the story.
- **Transition** wording between the two A-E-C proofs must be present.
- **Concluding Sentences** should sum up the entire paragraph with a final, impactful thought that links both proofs back to the thesis and explains how the overall paragraph adds to or supports the thesis. A concluding sentence is NOT a paraphrase or repeat of the topic sentence.
- Add a **bridge transition** between paragraphs. It can be incorporated into the concluding sentence of the leading paragraph or the topic sentence of the following paragraph or both.

Outline Structure

Thesis

I. Topic Sentence 1

A. Assertion 1

1. Evidence

2. Commentary

B. Transition & Assertion 2

1. Evidence

2. Commentary

C. Concluding Sentence

II. Topic Sentence 2

Why Am I Required to Draft in Outline Form?

An outline is an organizational tool that helps you plan, sort, and identify your ideas. It also allows you to quickly review whether or not your paragraph contains all of the necessary components and how those ideas relate. For example, if you don’t have a “2” after a “1” then you know you have forgotten your commentary.

What’s the Best Way to Use an Outline to Improve My Paragraphs?

Step 1: Start by creating an outline with only key terms or short phrases. In this way, you will quickly organize your main ideas in a logical order. Most writers find it easier to compose an essay by first planning and then writing.

Step 2: Go back and expand each key term or phrase into a full sentence. Usually, one sentence is enough for each element (T-A-E-C-C) but occasionally two or more sentences are needed – typically for commentary. Pay close attention to each level of the outline to make sure each piece of the paragraph is doing its required job and only its required job.

Examples: Assertions (A&B) must both provide story context and make a claim but they do not quote or begin to explain. Evidence (1&1) will always be a blended quote. Commentary (2&2) must give an explanation in your own words.

Assignment #4 INTRO AND CONCLUSION ROUGH DRAFT

- ❖ Write a rough draft of your introduction and conclusion paragraphs.
 - ❖ Also, add a creative essay title. The title should NOT restate or rephrase the prompt. Do not mention the character's name, the author's name, or the book's title. Be CREATIVE!
 - ❖ With a parent, work together to revise your rough draft until you have produced a copy that is well-edited and written to the best of your ability.
 - ❖ Upload to Turnitin.
-

Introduction Tips:

- Minimum of 5 complete sentences.
- Opening Hook
 - Must be intriguing/thought-provoking. Go to *Weebly – Core B – Resources* to see a list of 12 different types of hooks to choose from.
- Transition Sentence
 - No abrupt shifts. Provide a link from the hook to the background.
- Background
 - Include author's full name (spelled correctly) and the short story's full title in quotes.
 - Give brief story details/ideas that allow the reader to understand the thesis. (Think of basics like who, what, where, when)
 - Do not include evidence or begin your argument.
- Thesis
 - Since you have previously drafted your body paragraphs, now is a good time to reevaluate your thesis statement. Does it still fit the content of your body paragraphs? Does anything need to be changed or improved? Also, do you need to add a transition/sentence opener or change the wording slightly to help the thesis flow from the background?

Conclusion Tips:

- Minimum of 5 complete sentences.
- Restated Thesis
 - Have you made several changes such as a new sentence structure, reorder ideas, synonyms, new sentence opener, change length (shorter/longer), show instead of tell, etc.?
 - Have you restated the thesis with a conclusive tone to show that it is now proven?
- Argument Summary
 - *Transition* AND sum up your main arguments about the character's place in the story. Review your body paragraph topic sentences for help. This is not an evidence summary or a plot summary.
- Application
 - *Transition* and answer the question, "So what?" Why should your message matter to your reader?
 - Consider adding a final lesson or take-away, call-to-action, solution to a problem, or question for the reader to consider.
- Clincher
 - *Transition* and finish with a closing thought that ties back to your creative hook in the introduction. Readers' memories are short. You will need to REPEAT a few key words or ideas from the hook to remind your reader of where you started.

Assignment #5 FIRST REVISED DRAFT

- ❖ Following the tutor feedback on your outlines/rough drafts, combine your 5 paragraphs and make the necessary changes.
 - ❖ Add a Works Cited page.
 - ❖ Following the Literary Essay Parent Checklist, work together with a parent to continue editing your first draft.
 - **Note:** You must improve your first draft above and beyond those items noted by the tutor on the outlines/rough drafts. ***First drafts that do not show additional revising may lose as many as 10 points automatically.*** You can improve through stronger word choice, more persuasive language, varied sentence openers, better quote blends, clear and concise communication, etc.
 - ❖ Read your first draft one more time – OUT LOUD. If satisfied, you are ready to submit.
 - ❖ Upload to Turnitin AND submit a paper copy with signed parent checklist stapled BEHIND it.
-

First Draft Reminders:

- Must follow proper MLA document format.
- Must meet minimum page requirement. (5 paragraphs and **OVER 2 PAGES**)
- Must be proofread by a parent and show evidence of strong editing and revision.

If your first revised draft earns a grade of 92% or higher **and** contains only minor issues as determined by the tutor, you will be given the option to skip the final revised draft. Your first draft grade will be applied to your final draft. (You will receive the same percentage grade on both assignments.) Or, if preferred, you may choose to edit and submit a final draft for a higher grade.

Works Cited Page Tips

- Does your works cited page have a header in the upper right corner?
- If you are only quoting from one source, what should the title of your Works Cited page be?
- The entry for your short story should contain 5 elements. Have you included them all?
 - Last, First Middle. "Title." Publication Date, www.link.com. PDF download.
- Have you included the full link that connects directly to the PDF?

Assignment #6 FINAL REVISED DRAFT

- ❖ Following the tutor feedback on your first draft, make the necessary changes.
 - ❖ Print a new copy of the Literary Essay Parent Checklist and work together with a parent to continue editing your final draft.
 - ❖ Read your final draft one more time – OUT LOUD. If satisfied, you are ready to submit.
 - ❖ Upload to Turnitin.
 - ❖ Submit a paper copy with the second, signed parent checklist AND the graded first draft attached.
-

If you have been exempted from Final Draft Revisions – you must still submit your signed exemption form and re-upload your first draft as your final draft to Turnitin by the due date. Failure to do so will result in a late assignment penalty.

Character Essay – Parent Checklist

Student: _____

Parents: Please review the previously graded drafts and verify that all noted corrections have been made. Then, together with your student, *continue revising* by using this checklist as a guide. When finished, sign this form.

Students: Unless you have been excused from revisions by the tutor, you must improve your essay above and beyond those items noted by the tutor on previous drafts. *Essays that do not show additional revising may lose as many as 10 points automatically.*

General

- Short story titles in quotes. Novel titles in italics.
- After first full name, author referred to by last name only.
- Intro & Conclusion – minimum 5 sentences. (please count)
- Body Paragraphs – minimum 8 sentences. (please count)
- Essay Length – over 2 pages

MLA Formatting

- 1-inch margins on all sides.
- Double-spaced. No extra space between paragraphs. (i.e. set paragraph spacing to 0 “before” and “after”)
- Times New Roman, 12-pt font. (including header)
- The header includes the student’s last name, a space, and the page number in the upper right corner of *every* page (including Works Cited), ½ inch from the top.
- On the first page, aligned left:
 - 1st Line: Student’s First and Last Name
 - 2nd Line: Tutor’s Name (spelled correctly)
 - 3rd Line: Course Name
 - 4th Line: Date formatted like: 15 August 2023
- The essay title is centered and properly capitalized on the 5th line. (*not bold, not italics, not underlined*)
- The introduction begins on the 6th line.
- The first line of each paragraph is indented ½ inch.

Works Cited & In-Text Citations

- On its own page, the very next page after the conclusion.
- “Work” or “Works Cited” centered on the first line.
- Entries are in alphabetical order.
- Entries are double-spaced.
- Entries are aligned left with a ½ inch “hanging indent” (i.e. if an entry wraps to a 2nd line, the 2nd line is indented ½-in)
- All quotes have a properly formatted/punctuated citation.
Example: “This is the quote” (Dickens 33).
Dickens writes, “This is the quote” (33).

Word Choice & Sentence Structures

- Strong word choice, descriptive language.
- Limit of 2 “be” verbs per paragraph. (except direct quotes)
- No contractions or slang. (except direct quotes)
- 3rd person voice ONLY. (except direct quotes)
- At least 3 different sentence openers per paragraph.
- Proper transitions between sentences. No abrupt shifts from one idea to another.

Introduction

- Title: creative, hints at essay’s topic.
- Hook: broad, grabs attention, hints at topic.
- Transition: one sentence, links the hook to background.
- Background: introduce author, title, and provide a very short summary or the major/relevant story elements.
- Thesis Statement: topic, arguable viewpoint, with transition from the background for proper flow.

Conclusion

- Restated Thesis: the first sentence; say it in a new way that is not repetitive; multiple changes made; conclusive.
- Summarize: review strong arguments; no new evidence.
- Apply: answer “So what?”; final impression or take-away.
- Clincher: final sentence; remind the reader of the opening hook and wrap up the entire essay.

Body Paragraph Structure

- Topic sentence: broad, directly relates to thesis.
- 1st Literary Proof (A-E-C): see below
- Transition word/phrase: notes the change to the 2nd proof.
- 2nd Literary Proof (A-E-C): see below
- Concluding sentence: wraps up the entire paragraph’s topic (not just one proof); links to thesis; not repetitive.

Literary Proofs (A-E-C)

- Assertions: make a more specific claim about the topic AND give *brief* story context. Do not include evidence or begin to explain. Just state your idea or opinion as a fact.
- Evidence: *show* support for the assertion using a *blended*, direct quote from the novel. The quote must show obvious support for what you claimed in the assertion. Avoid basic blends: The author writes, “...” Bill says, “...”
- Commentary: *explain* how or why the evidence supports the assertion and/or proves the topic or thesis. Do not paraphrase the quote or repeat the assertion.

Bridge Transitions

- Use words/phrases to transition between the 1st & 2nd body paragraph and again between the 2nd & 3rd.

Parent Signature: _____