Essay Tips

Thesis Statements:

The key to writing a strong thesis statement is making an argument that is Provable, Arguable, and Worth Proving.

Provable: You can support the argument with strong examples from the text.

Arguable: Someone else could make an argument to counter yours.

Worth Proving: It isn’t so obvious that everyone accepts it as true.

Also, you should look for the element that links your ideas together. In other words, you must answer the question:

What is it that all of your points have in common

Sample Thesis Statements:

# Weak Thesis:

In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the children lose their innocence.

# Satisfactory Thesis:

In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the children lose their innocence because of their experiences.

# Strong Thesis:

In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, prejudice hastens the loss of innocence.

Sample Introduction:

 Dent 1

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ENG 3UI

8 March 2014

The Corruption of Childhood

 How is it that all the protections of youth are whisked away in such a short amount of time? The negative repercussions of prejudice and racism are truly innumerable, most specifically in youth. With maturing comes the gained knowledge of life and the wonders it holds, but also the loss of blissful ignorance and innocence. Harper Lee speaks to many of these worldly themes in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. To begin, the prejudicial hypocrisy of adults proves to be utterly confusing. Additionally, the disadvantages faced by minorities are recognized even in the judicial system. Finally, an unjust and guilty verdict exhibits the privileges of white society. **Evidently, in *To Kill a Mockingbird* exposure to prejudice hastens the loss of innocence.**

Sample Body Paragraph:

La 2

 In addition, the exposure to hypocritical prejudice is detrimental to Scout’s virtue. An example of this occurs when Scout reflects on Miss Gates’s different behaviour in and outside of the classroom. In a lesson at school, regarding the poor treatment of Jews in Germany, Scout is taught that “over here we don’t believe in persecuting anybody. Persecution comes from people who are prejudiced” (Lee 245). She tells Atticus about “Miss Gates [saying] it [is] awful, Hitler doin’ like he does”, (Lee 245) but is perplexed as she remembers the conversation between her teacher and Miss Stephanie Crawford on the night of the trial. Miss Crawford states “It’s time somebody taught ‘em a lesson, they were getting’ way above themselves, an’ the next thing they think they can do is marry us” (Lee 246-247). Scout’s youth is visibly portrayed when she has difficulty understanding Miss Gates’s hypocritical opinions. The exposure to such contradictory prejudiced views, exhibited especially by her teacher, awakens Scout to the realities of racism. She not only realizes Miss Gates’s duplicity, but also begins to understand “the laws and codes the town of Maycomb professes and lives by are always complex and often contradictory” (Bloom & Johnson 62). But knowledge is never gained without an influence on one’s morals; such is the worry for Scout’s experiences with racism. Such a young child as she is, Scout has already come into contact with the practice and explanation of the background, motives and questionable acceptance of racism. Therefore, with every encounter Scout has with prejudice, her youthful innocence is risked by the potential approval and application of a racist way of life. Undoubtedly, adults’ contradictory racism poses great dangers to the innocence of children in this novel.

Sample Conclusion:

La 3

 Unmistakably, the loss of innocence is greatly affected by a prejudiced environment. First of all, Miss Gates’s contradictory bias contributes to Scout’s confusion and loss of serene ignorance. Next, prejudice towards minorities exists even in the legal eye. Lastly, white supremacy causes the extremity of reality is inevitable, but the time comes when one must differentiate between those too young to be stripped of their peaceful naivety and innocence, and those developed enough to be exposed to the uncensored world. How does one draw the line between sheltered ignorance and the destruction of childhood?

La 4

Works Cited

Dolby, Nadine. “Research in Youth Culture and Policy: Current Conditions and Future

 Directions.” *Social Work and Society: The International Online-Only Journal* 6.2 (2008): n.

 pag. Web. 20 May 2009.

Henley, Patricia. *The Hummingbird House*. Denver: MacMurray, 1999. Print.

Wheelis, Mark. "Investigating Disease Outbreaks Under a Protocol to the Biological and Toxin

 Weapons Convention." *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 6.6 (2000): 595-600. Web. 8 Feb. 2009.

**Self Checklist for Essay**

Place a check(√) or an (x) for each question that you are either self-assessing or peer-assessing.

1. Is the essay 5 paragraphs?
2. Is the essay about 1200-1500 words?
3. Are there at least 5 sentences in each paragraph?
4. Are the four lines at the top of the first page correct (name,

teacher’s name, course code, date)?

1. Are the page numbers properly numbered? (Baillargeon 1)
2. Is the essay typed, double spaced, and twelve size font?
3. Is the essay in Times New Roman?
4. Are the new paragraphs indented?
5. Is the essay written in present tense?
6. Does the essay use transitions between paragraphs?
7. Is the essay free of contractions? (don’t, can’t etc)
8. Is the essay free of personal pronouns? (no use of I, me etc)
9. Does the essay use an appropriate, formal tone (no slang etc)
10. Does the essay have a title placed correctly?
11. Is the title, of the play, in the essay italicized?

Introduction:

1. Is the overall topic or issue of the essay introduced?
2. Does each of the supporting details have their own sentence?
3. Does the introduction end with the thesis statement?

Body Paragraphs:

1. Is the point made at the start of the paragraph?
2. Is there specific and detailed proof provided from the play?
3. Is the proof explained in detail?
4. Is there a concluding sentence?

Conclusion:

1. Does the concluding paragraph begin by re-stating the writer’s thesis?
2. Are the three main points re-stated, using different words from those in the introduction?
3. Does the essay end confidently in relation to the subject?