# To Kill A Mockingbird - Character Analysis Essay

**Assignment:** Your assignment is to write a character analysis of a major character in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Once you have chosen a character to analyze, choose three adjectives that describe that character. These adjectives, or **character traits**, will be the basis of your **five-paragraph essay**.

## Requirements:

 Your thesis statement should be stated directly in your introduction and be proven throughout your body paragraphs.

 You must use at least **one quotation** from the novel in each of the three body paragraphs to support your ideas.

 These quotations must be correctly documented according to MLA guidelines…

* The paper must be typed in **12 point font Times New Roman and double-spaced**.

The paper must have a title…do not underline it or put it in quotes.

Length – The paper should be at least **one and half full pages** typed, but no more than two pages.

 Points will be taken away for the following errors:

* Contractions (except in direct quotations from the story)… they are informal
* 1st (I, me, my) and 2nd (you, your) person pronouns… keep your paper in 3rd person (he/she).
* Slang and non-specific words (**thing, guy, a lot, kid, etc**.)… also informal
* Grammar, spelling, and usage errors
* Tense shifts…write in all present or all past tense…be consistent.

## Character Choices:

Atticus Finch Aunt Alexandra

Boo (Arthur) Radley Dill

Jem Finch

Miss Caroline

Miss Maudie Atkinson Mrs. Dubose

Scout Finch

* Others not listed?

# Writing Your Thesis Statement…

A thesis statement is a sentence or two that tells the reader what the rest of the essay is about. Good thesis statements do not simply announce a topic; they say something about the topic, and it provides the framework for your paper. Never start a thesis with, “In this paper I will discuss…”

A thesis statement makes a promise to the reader about the scope, purpose, and direction of the paper. It summarizes the conclusion that the writer has reached about the topic.

**For Example:** *Through Miss Maudie Atkinson’s open-mindedness, optimism, and compassion, she helps Jem and Scout better understand Atticus and their community.*

*Notice the three character traits here...*

## Paragraph #1

***Detailed Outline:***

**Introduction** – general comments about the character and/or novel lead you to your **thesis statement** (described above). Be sure you have identified the author and title of the book and the character you will be analyzing. Some questions you could address in your introduction include:

**Why did you pick this character?**

**What do you like and/or dislike about this character? Do you identify with this character on any level?**

**Do you know someone similar to him or her? Explain.**

## Paragraphs #2 - #4

**Three Body Paragraphs** – the **topic sentence** for each body paragraph includes one character trait (adjective) you chose to describe your character. For example, “Atticus Finch is a man of great integrity.” Follow the topic sentence with **evidence from the novel:** examples from the story that support your topic sentence, and at least one direct quotation from the novel in each body paragraph. Next, **explain** how your examples support your topic sentence, and conclude each body paragraph with a summarizing “clincher” sentence to wrap-up your ideas.

## Paragraph #5

Conclusion – restate your thesis statement and add some final thoughts about your character and/or the novel…leave the reader in awe of your wisdom!

# Format for Quotations

## Example #1 Basic Quotation

A change in Jem’s attitude toward the Radleys is shown when Scout reports, “Less than two weeks later we found a whole package of chewing gum, which we enjoyed, the fact that everything on the Radley Place was poison having slipped Jem’s memory” (Lee, 60).

*After every quote, write the author’s last name and the page number that the quote is found on in parenthesis, followed by period.*

*Create an intro to your quotation that helps the reader understand its meaning. This is called a “tag line.”*

## Example #2 A Quote within a Quote

Jem’s frustration with the injustices of the world is shown in the courtroom. “‟Doesn’t make it right,‟ said Jem stolidly. He beat his fist softly on his knee.

*Double quotation marks around the entire quote; single quotation marks to show where the quotations exist already in the text.*

“You just can’t convict a man on evidence like that – you can’t” (Lee, 220).

*Author’s last name and page number.*

## Example #3 Changing a word or two in a quotation to clarify its meaning.

Harper Lee helps her readers understand why this neighbor is so mysterious to the children of the neighborhood when she states that “Mr. Radley kept [Boo] chained to the bed most of the time” (Lee, 16).

*If you make a change to the original text (for clarity) put the change in brackets.*