

Name \_\_\_\_\_

English 9

Period \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Prejudice in *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Prompt: In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, there are many examples of prejudice. In the novel, Harper Lee shows the terrible effects that prejudice has on people, including the main characters.

In a well-developed 5 paragraph essay, provide evidence to support this statement. Remember to include specific details and examples in the form of quotations (cited in MLA format) from the novel in your essay.

#### I Introduction Paragraph

- A. **Hook:** Begin with a quote by a well-known speaker, a definition of "prejudice," or by an anecdote that demonstrates the harmful effects of prejudice, etc.

- B. **Transition:** Summarize the novel and connect to the idea(s) presented in the hook, making sure to introduce the title (italicize) and author.

- C. **Thesis statement:** Turn the prompt into a statement and add in three areas (examples of prejudice in the novel) that will be addressed in the body paragraph of the essay.

In *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, she shows the terrible effects of prejudice through the racism in Maycomb, the sexism towards Scout, and the rumors spread about Boo Radley.

### Body Paragraph #1:

1. **Topic Sentence:** Introduce one example of prejudice and the effect that it has on one character.

In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee shows the terrible effects of prejudice, specifically racism, when Tom Robinson is declared guilty at the end of his trial. It is evident to the reader that there was no actual evidence to determine this verdict; the jury convicted Tom due to the color of his skin. This has an effect on Tom Robinson and the children.

2. **Evidence:** use a transition and introduce a quotation (speaker and context) that is an example of a type of prejudice on a character and/or its effect. Be sure to include an MLA citation (Lee 2).

Atticus: "The state has not produced one iota of medical evidence to the effect that the crime Tom Robinson is charged with ever took place. It has relied instead upon the testimony of two witnesses whose evidence has not only been called into serious question in cross-examination, but has been flatly contradicted by the defendant" p. 271

3. **Reasoning:** Explain the evidence. How does it connect back to the topic sentence and your thesis statement? What is the effect of this type of prejudice on the character?

Despite Atticus' logical defense, Tom is found guilty. The reader can infer that this is because of the color of his skin and not based on any of the evidence provided by Atticus. This affects Tom Robinson because he is put back in jail for a crime he did not commit. The children are affected by this prejudice because they are able to see their town for what it really is: racist. After the trial, Jem finds himself in tears; he tells Atticus, "It aint right" (Lee 284). Through his innocent eyes, he is able to see the trial for the facts and he does not take into account the prejudice of the town.

### Body Paragraph #2:

1. **Topic Sentence:** Introduce one example of prejudice and the effect that it has on one character.

Furthermore, Lee uses Scout to show the effects of sexism, especially at the time this story is set. At this time, girls were supposed to proper and wear dresses. Scout defies these social norms and enjoys spending her time outdoors in overalls.

2. **Evidence:** use a transition and introduce a quotation (speaker and context) that is an example of a type of prejudice on a character and/or its effect. Be sure to include an MLA citation (Lee 2).

Scout as narrator: "...you've got to do something about her," Aunty was saying. "You've let things go on too long, Atticus, too long...Atticus it's alright to be soft-hearted, you're an easy man, but you have a daughter to think of. A daughter who's growing up" p.182

3. **Reasoning:** Explain the evidence. How does it connect back to the topic sentence and your thesis statement? What is the effect of this type of prejudice on the character?

As Scout is growing up, she enjoys playing games with her brother and Dill. She also enjoys her denim overalls. Some things that Scout does not enjoy include pink dresses and "acting like a lady". Aunt Alexandra is trying to tell Atticus that Scout needs more of a feminine influence to grow up and meet the standards of Maycomb's women. This has an effect on Scout because she does not enjoy Aunt Alexandra's news. She says, "I felt the starched walls of a pink cotton penitentiary closing in on me, and for the second time in my life I thought of running away. Immediately" (Lee 182). Scout is judged negatively based on her "tomboy" choices and this is something that causes her confusion throughout her younger years.

### Body Paragraph #3:

1. **Topic Sentence:** Introduce one example of prejudice and the effect that it has on one character.

Additionally, there are other types of prejudice besides racism seen in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The people of Maycomb are prejudice against Boo Radley because he never comes out of his house. This goes against the way that this southern town lives their lives. This has an effect on Scout and Jem because they grow up to fear Boo Radley and believe all of the rumors they are told.

2. **Evidence:** use a transition and introduce a quotation (speaker and context) that is an example of a type of prejudice on a character and/or its effect. Be sure to include an MLA citation (Lee 2).

Scout as narrator: "The Radleys... kept to themselves... The shutters and doors of the Radley house were closed on Sundays, another thing alien to Maycomb's ways" p. 11

3. **Reasoning:** Explain the evidence. How does it connect back to the topic sentence and your thesis statement? What is the effect of this type of prejudice on the character?

The rumors spread about Boo Radley are all products of the behavior of the Radleys. The people of Maycomb assumed there was something wrong with the Radleys because they liked to keep to themselves. This caused the children to believe the rumors about Boo Radley. Jem describes: "Boo was about six-and-a-half feet tall, judging from his tracks; he dined on raw squirrels and any cats he could catch, that's why his hands were bloodstained -- if you ate an animal raw, you could never wash the blood off. There was a long jagged scar that ran across his face; what teeth he had were yellow and rotten; his eyes popped and he drooled most of the time" (Lee 16). In the end, the children realize that the stories about Boo Radley are just that: stories. Boo Radley saves their lives and they are able to see him for who he really is: a man who would rather stay inside.

### Conclusion Paragraph:

1. Restate / summarize the topic sentences of your body paragraphs, using new words.

2. Connect back to your hook by relating your essay to the quote/anecdote/definition, etc.

3. So what? Why is this topic important to society?

MLA info:

Author: Harper Lee

Title: *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Publisher: Grand Central Publishing

City: New York

Year: 1960

Print