***To Kill a Mockingbird* In-Class Essay**

**Date: Monday, June 13th**

**You will type this essay in MLA Format: Times New Roman Font (Size 12) and Double-Spaced.**

Prompt: We used the six signposts to help us understand the themes of the novel as we read. Choose **one** of the signposts, and explain how they illuminate one major theme of the novel.

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| **Choose 1 of the Following Signposts:** | **Choose 1 of the Following Themes:** |
| 1. Contrast & Contradictions 2. Aha Moment 3. Tough Questions 4. Words of the Wiser 5. Again & Again 6. Memory Moment | 1. Courage means fighting for what is right, no matter what the cost. 2. Sometimes courage is shown by not giving in to the temptation to fight. 3. The best way to understand a person is “to stand in his or her shoes.” 4. All people deserve to be treated with dignity and compassion. |

Requirements:

* Write a four-paragraph essay in which you analyze a theme of the novel, and how that theme is demonstrated through your chosen signpost.
* **Introduction (ANT):** 
  + Begin with a thoughtful, engaging, and relevant statement about the theme (**attention-getter**).
  + Make certain to include **necessary information** (book title and author, signpost, relevant summary, introduction of specific characters you will mention in body paragraphs, etc.)
  + The **thesis** should state the main argument of your essay—the claim + your reasoning (i.e., how the signposts show a larger thematic idea of the book)
    - Example Thesis Structure: In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, (signpost) helps portray the idea that (theme) through (2 parts of the text)
* **2 Body Paragraphs (TIQA):**
  + Begin with a strong, clear **topic sentence** that states the main idea and wraps back to the thesis
    - Example Topic Sentence Structure: (Signpost) plays an important role in portraying the theme of (theme) because (1 part of the text from thesis)
  + Include 1 *specific* part from the novel **(evidence)** that supports the topic sentence and is **properly introduced** with *context of the quote* and a *signal phrase (i.e. He stated,…)*
    - Be sure ANY EVIDENCE from the novel is *correctly cited* using MLA format (Author’s Last Name and Page #): i.e. *He stated, “You never really know a person until you climb into his shoes and walk around in them” (Lee 36).* \*Note: Only include page number if it’s a direct quote
  + Include meaningful and extended **analysis** \*Note: the majority of each body paragraph will be your analysis/explanation of how that signpost/quote illuminates your chosen theme
  + Demonstrate unity and coherence (flow) by using **transitions** between paragraphs

• **Conclusion (RRF):**

* + End with a well-developed concluding paragraph that begins by **restating the thesis** in new way
  + **Sum up the main point** of each body paragraph (tell what you proved)
  + End with **final thoughts** that transition OUT of the essay (real-world application/reflection of the chosen theme…don’t mention the book)

**Important Reminders:**

* Use an academic tone—write in the third person and present tense ONLY! No contractions! (No “I, me, we, us, our, you)
* Use MLA format (heading and in-text citations).
  + Heading: Your Name, Ms. Nafso, 9 LC, 13 June 2016 (top left corner on different lines)
  + In-Text Citation Example: Scout points out in an Aha moment, “Until I feared I would lose it, I never loved to read. One does not love breathing” (Lee 18).
* *Note: ANALYZE! Do not summarize the plot. Only include what brief summary is necessary. Balance the BOOK and your BRAIN. Use specific examples/quotes from the book, and then use your brain to interpret the text. The most important part is what YOU have to say about that example. How does it support your thesis? Do not make me say “so what?” or “obviously!” after I read a paragraph.*

**Sample Thesis and Body Paragraph**

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9 LC

13 June 2016

Hypocracy and Prejudice Leading to Racism

**Thesis (End of Introduction):**

In *To Kill a Mockingbird,* contrast and contradictions help portray the idea that hypocrisy and prejudice in people’s speech and behavior perpetuate racism in society.

**Body Paragraph:**

**T:** The contrast and contradictions signpost helps readers understand the blatant hypocrisy, shown in the missionary circle, where the white women of Maycomb set aside their religious differences to discuss charity work to be done in town and around the world.

**I (*and Signal Phrase*):** In the story, Mrs. Merriweather updates the missionary circle on the sad, squalid lives of the Mrunas in Africa, but then backhandedly insults the Finch family for their involvement in the Robinson case. Mrs. Merriweather explains,

**Q (*and citation*):** “I tell you there are some good but misguided people in this town. Good, but misguided. Folks in this town who think they’re doing right, I mean. Now far be it from me to say who, but some of ‘em in this town thought they were doing the right thing a while back, but all they did was stir ‘em up” (Lee 176).

**A:** Mrs. Merriweather is in Atticus’s house, eating Atticus’s food, and she still has the audacity to insult his decision to defend Tom Robinson. She is obsessed with the idea of helping a tribe of Africans who live poor, miserable lives on another continent, but is firm in her belief that the African-Americans in her own community should continue living their poor, miserable lives in Maycomb. She is disappointed that Atticus chose to defend Tom Robinson because, in her eyes, the African American community was stirred up and given the idea that they should be treated equally. Mrs. Merriweather’s hypocrisy is clear to readers, but she has no idea how hypocritical her behavior is.

**Closing Sentence (Connection back to thesis):** Her racist belief that African Americans do not deserve as lavish a life as whites cause the other ladies at the tea to agree and think this way, which truly displays how hypocrisy can perpetuate racism in the town.