To Kill A Mockingbird Essay Topics

1. **Racism:** “I’m simply defending a Negro—his name’s Tom Robinson” (75). With these words Atticus informs Scout of his life-altering task of standing up to the prejudice and racism that pervades the sleepy southern town that was Maycomb, Alabama in the 1930s. Discuss the effects of racism on Maycomb citizens such as Tom and Helen Robinson, Calpurnia, Scout, Jem, Dill, or Mayella Ewell.

2. **Empathy:** According to Atticus, “You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view – until you climb into his skin and walk around in it” (30). How is empathy toward others demonstrated or learned by characters such as Atticus, Scout, Jem, Dill, Tom, Boo or Miss Maudie?

3. **Understanding:** Atticus replies to his daughter, upon her realization that most outcasts aren't bad but rather misunderstood, “Most people are, Scout, when you finally see them,” (281). How does the novel suggest that people have a core of goodness, and that they show that goodness when given a chance? Is the author too optimistic about the nature of people, or is she correct?

4. **Courage:** Atticus says to Jem that he wants his son “to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand” (112). How is courage defined in this novel? What character(s) best exemplify courage? Why? What point does Harper Lee want to make about courage through her use of these characters?

5. **Compassion:** During Tom’s testimony at the trial, Scout states, “It came to me that Mayella Ewell must have been the loneliest person in the world” (191). Is Mayella Ewell a character worthy of compassion? Answer this question using specific evidence from the novel and providing thoughtful commentary.

6. **Loss of Innocence:** With age and experience come knowledge, the realization of harsh realities, and finally wisdom and understanding. When she recalls Boo, Scout realizes, “We had given him nothing, and it made me sad” (278). Is growing up a series of gains or losses, triumphs or tragedies? Trace Scout’s journey from innocence to understanding, especially concerning her experiences with racism and death.

Requirements:
- 2-3 pages (500-750 words), typed, double spaced, 12 pt font (Times New Roman), 1 inch margins.
- MLA heading: full name, course title, teacher name, date, period
- Original title

- **Introduction:** Hook, Context, Thesis Statement, mention Claims
- **3 Body Paragraphs:** Each body paragraph begins with a Claim (Topic Sent.)
  - 1-3 quotes from text per body paragraph
  - 2-5 sentences of commentary on each quote
  - Concluding sentence at the end of each body paragraph
- **Conclusion:**
  - 5 -10 sentences
  - reinforces thesis, mentions claims
  - connects thesis to Universal Themes, or relates it to your own reality of the world today.

Rough Draft due date ____________
Final Draft due date ____________