

Ninth Grade Summer Reading Assignment

All incoming ninth grade students at A. R. Johnson are expected to read Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Elie Wiesel's *Night* for their summer reading assignment. Students should obtain a copy of the books and begin reading as soon as possible to ensure that they have enough time to finish the reading and the required essay. The essay will be due the first week of school in early August and will be followed by a test on the material.

Background

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee and *Night* by Elie Wiesel may appear to have nothing in common. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a fictional account of 1932 Alabama. *Night* is a work of nonfiction that takes place half a world away in Eastern Europe during World War II. But both works deal with larger, universal themes such as: intolerance, man's inhumanity to man, and the life lessons that come with growing up.

Your Task

You are to pick three of the themes that are handled in both *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Night*. Then, write a five-paragraph essay that compares and contrasts the two books focusing on these themes. As this is a formal analysis essay, you should be sure to use specific examples without simply summarizing the plot. In addition, your language in the essay should be formal and should not include any slang expressions.

Requirements

The essay should be typed and should be written in 12 point Times New Roman font with double spacing. It should follow a standard five-paragraph format as outlined below.

Paragraph 1—Introduction.

Paragraph 2—Discussion of Theme #1

Paragraph 3—Discussion of Theme #2

Paragraph 4—Discussion of Theme #3

Paragraph 5—Conclusion

Literary Analysis Essay – Rubric

An “A” Paper – Brilliant/Excellent

- Title is unexpectedly delightful and fully grabs reader’s attention
- Thesis fully answers essay prompt with unique, bold, and arguable insight
- Each body paragraph’s topic sentence sets a clear, powerful path in developing the thesis
- Concrete details are insightful, unexpected choices and smoothly embedded into the body paragraph
- Commentary shows depth of thought and presents unique, interesting insight
- Powerful vocabulary with no repetition of key words or phrases; always fresh and interesting
- Excellent sentence flow and variety of sentence structures
- Skillful use of transitions to help create a unified, cohesive piece of writing
- M.L.A. citations are correctly formatted and skillfully embedded so the resource information is seamless
- A lively, interesting writer’s voice comes through to the audience

A “B” Paper – Good/Above Average

- Title is appropriate to the topic, but lacks great inspiration
- Thesis fully answers essay prompt, but lacks the power of the “A” level thesis
- Each body paragraph’s topic sentence logically supports the thesis, but doesn’t add more power
- Concrete details are appropriate, but rather obvious choices; they are appropriately placed in the body paragraph
- Commentary is generally good analysis, but a bit obvious at times; sometimes, you don’t dig deep enough
- Good vocabulary that clearly, but not always powerfully, expresses your ideas; you don’t repeat words or phrases
- Smooth sentence flow and occasionally effective sentence variety
- Correct use of transitions for unity and cohesiveness
- M.L.A. citations are correctly formatted and embedded
- The writer’s voice comes through to the audience, but the passion falls flat at times

A “C” Paper – Okay/Average

- Title is flat or predictable
- Thesis answers essay prompt, but is tired, clichéd, or too safe/bland
- Each body paragraph’s topic sentence supports the thesis, but construction is mechanical
- Concrete details are present, but blatantly obvious choices; you need to more smoothly embed the material
- Commentary is too obvious, superficial, simplistic, or repetitive; you don’t take your ideas very far
- Average, simple vocabulary or overly flowery language that blocks meaning at times
- Sentence flow is choppy at times; limited sentence variety
- Limited use of transitions; at times, an inappropriate transition is used or is missing altogether
- M.L.A. citations are correctly formatted for the most part, but embedding is clunky/not always handled well
- The writer’s voice is flat, too formal, or rigid. Where’s the passion in your voice?

A “D” Paper – Demonstrates Problems/Below Average

- Title is just a restatement of the title of the work being discussed or just a label
- Thesis does not fully answer the essay prompt; you seem to be struggling with your thoughts
- Each body paragraph’s topic sentence doesn’t clearly connect to the thesis and/or includes too much plot summary
- Concrete details are inaccurate or not connected to the topic sentence; embedding of material is clunky
- Commentary is weak, veers off-topic, or relies too heavily on plot summary
- Flat, below grade-level vocabulary and/or inappropriate diction
- Flow is mostly choppy and erratic; little or no sentence variety
- Little or no use of transitions
- M.L.A. citations are not correctly formatted or embedded
- No writer’s voice is present. The words are lifeless or robotic.

A “F” Paper – Far Below Average

- Is incomplete, incoherent, undeveloped, or does not meet the requirements of the assignment

Content: _____ out of 50 possible points

Grammar: _____ out of 50 possible points

Total: _____