Character Analysis Essay for *To Kill a Mockingbird*

**Class:** Language Arts  
**Subject:** Writing  
**Lesson Title:** Character Analysis Essay  
**Grade Level:** 7  
**Lesson Length:** 5+ days (85 min each day)

The purpose of this lesson is to write a five paragraph character analysis essay about one character from a novel.

**Content Objectives:** Given a writing assignment, all students will choose a character from the novel and write a character analysis essay.

1. ELLs will become familiar with character traits that define a person.  
2. ELLs will investigate the novel and find examples that model a specific character trait.  
3. ELLs will help create a list of character traits with examples from the novel for a chosen character on the board as a whole class activity facilitated by the teacher.  
4. ELLs will create a five paragraph character analysis essay with examples and supporting details.

**Language Objectives:** Given a writing assignment, all students will be able to:

1. ELLs will read the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*.  
2. ELLs will discuss character traits and understand their meanings.  
3. ELLs will list the traits of their chosen character with examples from the text.  
4. ELLs will write an essay.

**Culture Objectives:** Students will be able to list, discuss, and understand different character traits and be able to defend choices made about a particular character.

ELLs will pair with a native English speaking student and discuss traits that the character possesses.
**North Carolina Standard Course of Study**

3.03 Study and create arguments that evaluate by:

- understanding the importance of establishing a firm judgment.
- justifying the judgment with logical, relevant reasons, clear examples, and supporting details.
- creating an organizing structure appropriate to purpose, audience, and context

**Teacher Materials:**

- Character Analysis and Five-Paragraph Essay handouts
- Copy of novel
- List of character traits
- White board and board markers
- Computer
- Smart Room equipment

**Activity 1:**
Teacher will ask students to say the names of the main characters from the novel; Atticus, Scout, Jem, Calpurnia, Aunt Alexandra, Dill, and Tom Robinson. Teacher will list the names across the white board. Teacher will direct the students to focus on one character and give character traits that person possesses. Teacher will then ask the students to think of examples from the novel that proves that character has that trait. Teacher will continue with the other characters in the same fashion until all the characters have been discussed.

**Activity 2:**
Teacher will direct students to the pages in their unit folder for writing a character analysis and a five-paragraph essay. Teacher will read and discuss the handouts. Teacher will explain that the introduction paragraph must capture the reader’s attention, introduce and include a brief explanation of the character as well as the thesis or topic sentence (what they want to prove). Teacher will explain that the body paragraphs will focus on only one character trait and must contain at least two examples from the novel that support the claim that the person has that trait.
Activity 3:
Teacher will focus on one character as an example for the students. Teacher will demonstrate the process for organizing body paragraphs. Character traits for the person will be chosen and examples from the novel will be given to support the trait.

Using the Smart Room equipment, the teacher will demonstrate the writing process by writing her own introduction paragraph. Students will then begin writing their introduction. Teacher will monitor students’ progress by reading paragraphs aloud and discussing with the group. The class will decide if the student has met the criteria for that paragraph and make suggestions. Students will edit as needed.

Activity 4:
Teacher will write her first body paragraph using the Smart Room technology to demonstrate the process. One character trait will be the focus and at least two examples from the novel will be chosen.

Students will write their first body paragraph. Teacher will monitor progress by reading paragraphs and discussing with the student and making suggestions if needed. Students will edit paragraphs using suggestions made by the teacher.

Other body paragraphs will follow the same procedure.

Activity 5:
Teacher will demonstrate the process for writing a conclusion paragraph using Smart Room equipment. Paragraph will include a restatement of the thesis and a summary of what was written, but in different words.

Students will write their conclusion paragraphs with teacher monitoring as above.

Activity 6:
Students will utilize mobile wireless computer lab to type their edited essays. Students will save their essay and print a copy for the teacher.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose for Technology</th>
<th>Use of Technology</th>
<th>Purpose of Technology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Technology for Teaching</td>
<td>Teacher-Use Only Smart Room Equipment</td>
<td>Technology as a Tool</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>Instructing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructional Technology for Learning</td>
<td>Student Use Only Computer--Word Processing</td>
<td>Generating</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Computer—Word Processing</td>
<td>Creating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lesson Author: Shawn Reavis  
School: Hudson Middle School  
Signature: Shawn Reavis  
Permission to Publish: ✓ Yes _____ No
Character Analysis

An activity you will frequently be asked to do in literature classes is write a character analysis, which means you must look carefully at a character and describe the character in detail. You must tell what kind of person the character is, what he/she does and says, and why you think he/she does and says these things. The three items you need to look at most closely are the character’s motivations, values, and reactions to situations.

First list you answers to these questions when analyzing a character:

- What does the character do most of the time, and how does he/she do it?
- Does the character say what he/she really means, or does he/she mean something other than what he/she says?
- Why does the character do what he/she does?
- On what does the character place high value in terms of money, fame, material possessions, family and so forth?
- Does the character have a high standard of ethics? Is he/she honest, compassionate, and responsible? Does he/she have integrity?
- Is the character consistent? Does he/she behave similarly in all situations?
- Identify a situation which shows the true personality of the character. How does he/she react under pressure? Is he/she logical and reasonable?

Activity: You will complete a character analysis. Follow these steps.
1. Choose a character in To Kill a Mockingbird to analyze.
2. Compile a list of the character traits your character exhibits in the novel.
3. Write a five-paragraph essay in which you analyze the character, following the structure described below or the directions given on The Five-Paragraph Essay page.

- Write a first paragraph which introduces the character about whom you are writing and the main idea of what you wish to say about that character. This paragraph should contain your thesis statement.
- Write three paragraphs which go into detail about your character. Use evidence from the novel and from the list you have compiled. Concentrate each paragraph on a character trait you have identified, and show why that trait is present. [You should have at least two examples from the novel.]
- Write a final paragraph in which you “wrap up” your essay and show why the thesis statement has been proven by the evidence presented.
The Five-Paragraph Essay

Learning to write a five-paragraph essay is one of the most useful things you can do. You will write these essays all through your middle school, high school, and college, and you can use the same principles of writing throughout your life, especially as part of an occupation or profession in which you are required to write reports of various kinds. Master this basic format now, and writing will be that much easier for you in the future.

Here is the basic format:

- The first paragraph introduces the main idea of what you wish to say. This paragraph will contain your thesis statement.
- The next three paragraphs go into detail about your main idea and illustrate or prove it.
- The final paragraph “wraps up” your essay, stating why your thesis has been proven or illustrated through the evidence presented.

The first paragraph is your introduction. You capture your reader’s attention in this paragraph. You must always write for your reader, whether the reader is your teacher, your employer, or any other audience. This first paragraph grabs the reader’s interest in your topic, gives background on it, and leads your reader to the main idea you want him or her to take from your paper. You may write it before or after you write the main body of your essay. You may write a rough introduction first and then revise it after the rest of your essay is finished. When you write the introduction is not the important thing; that you do write it is. There is no set number of sentences, and the last sentence will lead into your second paragraph.

The body of your essay consists of three paragraphs. Each paragraph will contain a main idea supporting what you have written in your thesis statement in the first paragraph, and each paragraph will have a separate idea. In these paragraphs you provide the details that lead you to form your thesis. The last sentence of each paragraph will end with a sentence which brings the main idea of the paragraph to a close and leads into the next paragraph.

The conclusion of your essay is in the final paragraph. Its purpose is to wrap up the main idea, or thesis, of the essay. This paragraph will not introduce any new ideas. Instead, you will restate your thesis and summarize what you have written, but in different words. It is the most important paragraph of your essay, because it is the one your readers will most remember. You conclusion will emphasize the significance of the thesis statement, complete the essay, and leave a final impression on your reader.

Activity: Choose a theme from To Kill a Mockingbird and following the above steps, write a five-paragraph essay about that theme with an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td>Ideas are expressed in a clear manner. May have slight lapses in organization.</td>
<td>Ideas are somewhat clear. May have some ideas that do not relate to subject.</td>
<td>Ideas are apparent, but may have severe lapses in organization and seem confusing.</td>
<td>Ideas are confusing &amp;/or not related. No organization of ideas and very confusing.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Content-Paragraphs</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Paragraph introduces the <strong>character</strong> and includes the <strong>thesis statement</strong> and the <strong>title</strong> of the novel. Thesis statement has <strong>three character traits</strong>.</td>
<td>Paragraph introduces the <strong>character</strong> and includes the <strong>thesis statement</strong> and the <strong>title</strong> of the novel. Thesis statement has <strong>two character traits</strong>.</td>
<td>Paragraph introduces the <strong>character</strong> and includes the <strong>thesis statement</strong> and the <strong>title</strong> of the novel. Thesis statement may have <strong>one character trait</strong>.</td>
<td>Paragraph introduces the <strong>character</strong> but does not include the title &amp;/or thesis statement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>Paragraph focuses on <strong>one trait</strong> and includes at least <strong>two examples</strong> or more from the novel with appropriate support and elaboration.</td>
<td>Paragraph focuses on <strong>one trait</strong> and includes at least <strong>two examples</strong> or more from the novel.</td>
<td>Paragraph focuses on <strong>one trait</strong> and includes at least <strong>one example</strong> or more from the novel.</td>
<td>Paragraph may focus on more than one trait or not at all.</td>
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<td>Second</td>
<td>Paragraph focuses on <strong>one trait</strong> and includes at least <strong>two examples</strong> or more from the novel with appropriate support and elaboration.</td>
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<td>Paragraph focuses on <strong>one trait</strong> and includes at least <strong>one example</strong> or more from the novel.</td>
<td>Paragraph may focus on more than one trait or not at all.</td>
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<td>Third</td>
<td>Paragraph focuses on <strong>one trait</strong> and includes at least <strong>two examples</strong> or more from the novel with appropriate support and elaboration.</td>
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<td>Paragraph focuses on <strong>one trait</strong> and includes at least <strong>one example</strong> or more from the novel.</td>
<td>Paragraph may focus on more than one trait or not at all.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Paragraph includes a</td>
<td>Paragraph includes a</td>
<td>Paragraph includes a</td>
<td>Paragraph may or may not</td>
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<td>Summarization</td>
<td>Conventions (grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling)</td>
<td>Neatness</td>
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<tr>
<td>summarization of what was written in the body and a restatement of the thesis, but in other words. Conclusion emphasizes the significance of the thesis and leaves a final impression on the reader.</td>
<td>0-4 errors including all conventions and paragraph form.</td>
<td>Entire essay is typed using a readable 12 font and is double spaced. Each page has a header that includes name, date, and title</td>
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<td>summarization of what was written in the body and a restatement of the thesis, but in other words.</td>
<td>5-7 errors including all conventions and paragraph form.</td>
<td>Most of essay is typed using a readable 12 font and double spaced. Each page has a header that includes name, date, and title</td>
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<td>summarization of what was written in the body and a restatement of the thesis, but in the same words.</td>
<td>8-10 errors including all conventions and paragraph form.</td>
<td>Some of essay is typed using a 12 font and double spaced. Each page has a header that includes name, date, and title</td>
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<td>include a summarization of what was written &amp;/or a restatement of the thesis.</td>
<td>11+ errors including all conventions and paragraph form.</td>
<td>None of essay is typed.</td>
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