

## English 10 – Essay Topics

Mrs. Canam

1. **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?
2. **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.
3. **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?
4. **Loss of Innocence:** With age and experience come knowledge, the realization of harsh realities, and finally wisdom and understanding. Trace Scout and Jem’s journey from innocence to understanding in a thoughtful essay. What are the major life lessons they absorb and how do they change because of them?

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