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Mrs. Elwood

English I / Period 6

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“I believe in the equality of man; and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow-creatures happy” (Thomas Paine). According to Paine, religion and justice are inextricably connected. If people consider themselves Godly, they must seek justice for others. For example, students should stick up for a peer getting bullied. When people see someone sneak a piece of candy or a CD into a jacket pocket, they must speak up. Often, someone will say, “It’s none of your business.” Wouldn’t everyone want a witness to speak up? And when people commit a little social blunder, accidentally say something offensive, people could be merciful. Some awful comments could be ignored. If religious people truly wanted to make their “fellow-creatures happy,” they should not consider their own needs more important than the needs of others. They, too, should believe in equality and report a theft, rescue a victim of bullying or help someone save face. But believing and behaving are quite different. Moral quandaries, sometimes quite large ones, take place in novels as well as in daily life. In Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird* (*TKAM*), an innocent man dies and the following people are responsible: Mayella Ewell (60%), her father, Bob Ewell (20%), and Tom Robinson (10%).

Although some might want to assign more blame to Tom Robinson, he was truly a victim. Tom received no justice, mercy or happiness because of Mayella and her disgusting father. Unfortunately, Tom did not receive the benefits of Paine’s wisdom, despite having lived a good life. He suffered the biggest bully of all: racism. Society has come a long way since the 1930s and no one should have to deal with such injustice today although perhaps some do. Most people, however, have much simpler struggles. When you see someone getting picked on, stealing, or doing wrong that hurts others, you should step up. Atticus is the best role model. He stood up for justice against incredible odds and so should we.

**Introduction elements:**

* A hook – a famous quote (Other introductions will have different hooks.)
* A discussion about the quote (but not about *TKAM*)
* A transition from this discussion to the thesis
* A thesis statement

*Somewhere in the transition or the thesis statement, the book and the author must be named. Use the author’s first and last name at first mention, then only last name. Set up an abbreviation for the book title early but also only if you use it.*

**Elements to avoid in the introduction:**

* Discussion about *TKAM*

**Conclusion elements:**

* A connection (transition) from the last body paragraph
* Application of the famous quote ideas to the novel
* Application of the famous quote discussion to the novel
* A reference to the thesis
* A call to action – You may use informal pronouns here.

**Elements to avoid in the conclusion:**

* + New arguments or new points
  + A word-for-word restating of the famous quote or the thesis
  + Do not begin with these words: In conclusion,