



## ***To Kill a Mockingbird* Argument Essay**

### **English Common Core Standards**

W1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

a. Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

b. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.

c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

d. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

W4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

W9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

### **Learning Targets**

- Students will analyze how an author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evident or viewpoints.
- Students will write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- Students will identify the argument and specific claims in a text.
- Students will craft the claim of their argument essay based on the strongest evidence.
- Students will support their claims with reasons, details, and quotes from the novel.
- Students will revise their work by incorporating helpful feedback from partners.
- Students will write an organized essay about *To Kill a Mockingbird*.
- Students will use correct mechanics.

## Writing Improvement Tracker

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b><u>Strategies to Improve Writing</u></b>	
Revise my writing (or my planning) multiple times	Ask myself, "Does this make sense?"
Look at other models	Read the necessary texts closely
Read others' work	Talk through my ideas with an adult
Ask questions when I have them	Use quote sandwiches
Take a break and reread with fresh eyes	Have another student write the gist of my paragraphs and make sure they match what I thought they were

### Day 1

#### Review Argument Essay Vocabulary Words to Know

Definitions on Quizlet: <https://quizlet.com/22325600/academic-vocabulary-for-argument-flash-cards/>

argument	claim	reasons	evidence	ethos
pathos	logos	concession	qualifier	bias
denotation	connotation	loaded language	credibility	tone

*To Kill a Mockingbird* Model Essay

*Essay Prompt: When Mrs. Dubose dies, Atticus says, “It’s when you know you’re licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you see it through no matter what.” (149) Does it make sense for Mrs. Dubose to take a stand for herself? Give evidence from the text to support your thinking, and be sure to take into account what people who disagree might say.*

Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose is a grumpy old woman who lives down the street from the Finches in Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*. She spends her days in bed, but sometimes sits on her porch in her wheelchair and yells at Jem and Scout as they walk by. Despite her rough exterior, Mrs. Dubose takes a stand for herself, determined to overcome a morphine addiction before she dies. Because of her high expectations for herself and her courage, it makes sense for Mrs. Dubose to take that stand.

The first reason it makes sense for Mrs. Dubose to take a stand is that she has high expectations for people, including herself. When Jem and Scout walk by her house, Mrs. Dubose would not let any small transgression go by without commenting on it. For instance, Scout says “If I said as sunnily as I could, ‘Hey, Mrs. Dubose,’ I would receive for an answer, ‘Don’t you say hey to me you ugly girl! You say good afternoon, Mrs. Dubose!’” (133) This shows that Mrs. Dubose holds high expectations of others, even if they make a small mistake. Just as she had high expectations for Scout and Jem’s behavior, she had high expectations of herself. After her death, Atticus reports that, “She said she was going to leave this world beholden to nothing and nobody.” (148) This shows that Mrs. Dubose meant to hold herself to the kind of expectations that she holds others to, even if it was going to be very difficult for her.

The second reason it makes sense for Mrs. Dubose to take a stand is her courage. As Atticus says to Jem, Mrs. Dubose was in a lot of pain. “Most of time you were reading to her, I doubt if she heard a word you said. Her whole mind and body were concentrated on that alarm clock.” (111) This shows that Mrs. Dubose needed to find a way to keep her mind off the pain. The fact that she was successful shows how brave she was. Atticus says to Jem: “I wanted you to see something about her—I wanted you to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand.... She was the bravest person I ever knew.” (149) This demonstrates that Mrs. Dubose has lots of courage, even though she seems so hateful. Mrs. Dubose shows courage by taking a stand for herself.

Some might say that it does not make sense for Mrs. Dubose to take this stand. It is true that her decision to overcome her addiction increases her pain. As Atticus says about her morphine addiction, “She’d have spent the rest of her life on it and died without so much agony, but she was too contrary ...” (147) This shows that it was agony to get herself off morphine. However, that reinforces the idea that Mrs. Dubose is, in fact, a brave woman. If she tolerates pain in order to die how she wants to, it means that she is courageous. Therefore, it does make sense for Mrs. Dubose to take that stand.

It is clear that Mrs. Dubose’s decision to take a stand for herself makes sense. She holds herself to the same high expectations that she holds others to. Mrs. Dubose is also very brave and faces pain and suffering to take her stand. Mrs. Dubose shows how important it is to stand up for yourself, even “... when you know you’re licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you see it through no matter what.” (148)

Fill out this chart with evidence from the essay above.

**Supporting Evidence-Based Claims:**

<b>Body Paragraph 1</b>		
Reason 1:		
Evidence	Evidence	Evidence
How does this evidence support this reason?	How does this evidence support this reason?	How does this evidence support this reason?

<b>Body Paragraph 2</b>		
Reason 1:		
Evidence	Evidence	Evidence
How does this evidence support this reason?	How does this evidence support this reason?	How does this evidence support this reason?

From Odell Education. Used by permission.

Body Paragraph 3		
Reason 1:		
Reason for counterclaim:		
Evidence	Evidence	Evidence
How does this evidence support this reason?	How does this evidence support this reason?	Why is your claim stronger than this counterclaim?

### Exit Ticket

**Directions:** Read the essay prompt.

Atticus says, “Simply because we were licked a hundred years before we started is no reason for us not to try to win” (Chapter 9, page 76). Now that you have read the whole text, what do you think? Does it make sense for Atticus to take a stand to defend Tom Robinson? Give evidence from the text to support your thinking, and be sure to take into account what people who disagree might say.

1. What will you need to do before you begin writing in order to address the prompt well in your essay?

---



---



---



---



---



---

## Day 2

### End of Unit 2 Assessment Prompt: *To Kill a Mockingbird* Argument Essay

Atticus says, “Simply because we were licked a hundred years before we started is no reason for us not to try to win” (Chapter 9, page 101). Now that you have read the whole text, what do you think? Does it make sense for Atticus to take a stand to defend Tom Robinson? Give evidence from the text to support your thinking, and be sure to take into account what people who disagree might say.

Atticus’s words and actions	What do others say about Atticus	Page Number	What does this reveal about Atticus’s character?

Atticus's words and actions	What do others say about Atticus	Page Number	What does this reveal about Atticus's character?

## Planning for Your Essay

Atticus says, “Simply because we were licked a hundred years before we started is no reason for us not to try to win” (Chapter 9, page 76). Now that you have read the whole text, what do you think? Does it make sense for Atticus to take a stand to defend Tom Robinson? Give evidence from the text to support your thinking, and be sure to take into account what people who disagree might say.

---

1. What is your claim about Atticus’s decision to defend Tom Robinson?

---

---

---

2. What reasons will you use to support your claim?

---

---

---

3. What counterclaim will you include in your essay?

---

---

---



**Supporting Evidence-Based Claims:**

<b>Body Paragraph 1</b>		
Reason 1:		
Evidence	Evidence	Evidence
How does this evidence support this reason?	How does this evidence support this reason?	How does this evidence support this reason?

<b>Body Paragraph 2</b>		
Reason 1:		
Evidence	Evidence	Evidence
How does this evidence support this reason?	How does this evidence support this reason?	How does this evidence support this reason?

### Body Paragraph 3

Reason 1:

Reason for counterclaim:

Evidence	Evidence	Evidence
How does this evidence support this reason?	How does this evidence support this reason?	Why is your claim stronger than this counterclaim?

## Day 3

Read the directions on the next page and then see the quote sandwich handout for this activity and peer editing information. The example on the next page is just a sample of the activity.

Quote Sandwich Guide

A sandwich is made up of three parts—the bread on top, the filling in the middle, and the bread on the bottom. A “quote sandwich” is similar; it is how you use evidence in an argument essay. First, you introduce a quote by telling your reader where it came from. Then, you include the quote. Lastly, you explain how the quote supports your idea. Read this example of using a quote in an argument essay, then take a look at the graphic:

*When Jem and Scout walk by her house, Mrs. Dubose would not let any small transgression go by without commenting on it. For instance, Scout says “If I said as sunnily as I could, ‘Hey, Mrs. Dubose,’ I would receive for an answer, ‘Don’t you say hey to me you ugly girl! You say good afternoon, Mrs. Dubose!’” (99) This shows that Mrs. Dubose holds high expectations of others, even if they make a small mistake.*

**Introduce the quote.**

This includes the “who” and “when” of the quote.

Example: *When Jem and Scout walk by her house, Mrs. Dubose would not let any small transgression go by without commenting on it.*

Sample sentence starters for introducing a quote:

In chapter \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

When Scout is \_\_\_\_\_, she \_\_\_\_\_.

After \_\_\_\_\_, Atticus \_\_\_\_\_.

**Include the quote.**

Make sure to punctuate the quotes correctly, using quotation marks. Remember to cite the page number in parentheses after the quote.

Example: *For instance, Scout says “If I said as sunnily as I could, ‘Hey, Mrs. Dubose,’ I would receive for an answer, ‘Don’t you say hey to me you ugly girl! You say good afternoon, Mrs. Dubose!’” (99)*

**Analyze the quote.**

This is where you explain how the quote supports your idea.

Example: *This shows that Mrs. Dubose holds high expectations of others, even if they make a small mistake.*

Sample sentence starters for quote analysis:

This means that \_\_\_\_\_.

This shows that \_\_\_\_\_.

This demonstrates that \_\_\_\_\_.

To Kill a Mockingbird Essay Planner

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date:**

**Focus Question:** Does it make sense for Atticus to defend Tom Robinson?

I. Introduction	
A. Hook to capture the reader's interest and attention	
B. Name the book and author	
C. Give brief background information to the reader about the book (characters, plot overview, etc.)	
D. Claim	

<b>II. Body Paragraph 1</b>	
First reason to support your claim	
A. Topic sentence	
B. Quote sandwich 1	
C. Quote sandwich 2	
D. Quote sandwich 3	
Concluding Sentence	

<b>III. Body Paragraph 2</b>	
Second reason to support your claim	
A. Topic sentence	
B. Quote sandwich 1	
C. Quote sandwich 2	
D. Quote sandwich 3	
Concluding Sentence	

<b>IV. Body Paragraph 3</b>	
Counterclaim	
A. Topic sentence	
B. Reason to support counterclaim	
C. Quote sandwich 1	
D. Quote sandwich 2	
E. Response to counterclaim	
F. Explanation of response to counterclaim	
G. Concluding Sentence	

<b>V. Conclusion</b>	
A Restate claim	
B. Summarize reasons	
C. Explain why your view is worth consideration by the reader	

**Model To Kill a Mockingbird Essay Planner**  
(optional)

**Focus Question:** Does it make sense for Atticus to defend Tom Robinson?

I. Introduction	
A. Hook to capture the reader's interest and attention	<b>Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose is a grumpy old woman</b>
B. Name the book and author	<b>To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee</b>
C. Give brief background information to the reader about the book (characters, plot overview, etc.)	<b>Mrs. Dubose is grumpy. She spends her days in bed, but sometimes sits on her porch in her wheelchair. She yells at Jem and Scout as they walk by.</b>
D. Claim	<b>Despite her rough exterior, Mrs. Dubose takes a stand for herself, determined to overcome a morphine addiction before she dies. Because of her high expectations for herself and her courage, it makes sense for Mrs. Dubose to take that stand.</b>

II. Body Paragraph 1	
First reason to support your claim	<b>Mrs. Dubose has high expectations for herself</b>
A. Topic sentence	<b>The first reason it makes sense for Mrs. Dubose to take a stand is that she has high expectations for people, including herself.</b>
B. Quote sandwich 1	<b>When Jem and Scout walk by her house, Mrs. Dubose would not let any small transgression go by without commenting on it. For instance, Scout says "If I said as sunnily as I could, 'Hey, Mrs. Dubose,' I would receive for an answer, 'Don't you say hey to me you ugly girl! You say good afternoon, Mrs. Dubose!'" (133) This shows that Mrs. Dubose holds high expectations of others, even if they make a small mistake.</b>
C. Quote sandwich 2	<b>Just as she had high expectations for Scout and Jem's behavior, she had high expectations of herself. After her death, Atticus reports that, "She said she was going to leave this world beholden to nothing and nobody." (148) This shows that Mrs. Dubose meant to hold herself to the kind of expectations that she holds others to.</b>
D. Quote sandwich 3	
Concluding Sentence	<b>Mrs. Dubose meant to hold herself to the kind of expectations that she holds others to, even if it was going to be very difficult for her.</b>  <b>Note: The concluding sentence is also part of the second quote sandwich in this paragraph.</b>

<b>III. Body Paragraph 2</b>	
Second reason to support your claim	<b>Mrs. Dubose is courageous.</b>
A. Topic sentence	<b>The second reason it makes sense for Mrs. Dubose to take a stand is her courage.</b>
B. Quote sandwich 1	<b>As Atticus says to Jem, Mrs. Dubose was in a lot of pain. “Most of time you were reading to her, I doubt if she heard a word you said. Her whole mind and body were concentrated on that alarm clock.” (148) This shows that Mrs. Dubose needed to find a way to keep her mind off the pain. The fact that she was successful shows how brave she was.</b>
C. Quote sandwich 2	<b>Atticus says to Jem: “I wanted you to see something about her—I wanted you to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand.... She was the bravest person I ever knew.” (149) This demonstrates that Mrs. Dubose has lots of courage, even though she seems so hateful.</b>
D. Quote sandwich 3	
Concluding Sentence	<b>Mrs. Dubose shows courage by taking a stand for herself.</b>



IV. Body Paragraph 3	
Counterclaim	<b>It does not make sense for Mrs. Dubose to take a stand for herself.</b>
A. Topic sentence	<b>Some might say that it does not make sense for Mrs. Dubose to take this stand.</b>
B. Reason to support counterclaim	<b>It is true that her decision to overcome her addiction increases her pain.</b>
C. Quote sandwich 1	<b>As Atticus says about her morphine addiction, “She’d have spent the rest of her life on it and died without so much agony, but she was too contrary ...” (147) This shows that it was agony to get herself off morphine.</b>
D. Quote sandwich 2	
E. Response to counterclaim	<b>However, that reinforces the idea that Mrs. Dubose is, in fact, a brave woman.</b>
F. Explanation of response to counterclaim	<b>If she tolerates pain in order to die how she wants to, it means that she is courageous.</b>
G. Concluding Sentence	<b>Therefore, it does make sense for Mrs. Dubose to take that stand.</b>

V. Conclusion	
A Restate claim	<b>It is clear that Mrs. Dubose’s decision to take a stand for herself makes sense.</b>
B. Summarize reasons	<b>She holds herself to the same high expectations that she holds others to. Mrs. Dubose is also very brave and faces pain and suffering to take her stand.</b>
C. Explain why your view is worth consideration by the reader	<b>Mrs. Dubose shows how important it is to stand up for yourself, even “... when you know you’re licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you see it through no matter what.” (149).</b>

Day 4-6 write essay and do teacher conferencing