

**Persuasive Letter**  
***To Kill A Mockingbird***

Throughout this unit, we have discussed the historical background of the racial tensions of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in America, and the different ideologies represented by characters in *To Kill A Mockingbird*. We have also discussed arguments, and their effectiveness in terms of claim, evidence, and counterargument, etc. As *To Kill A Mockingbird* now comes to a close, we have seen argument in action, as Atticus defended Tom Robinson at the trial. Now, it is your turn to use evidence from the novel to argue your own opinion.

**Choice 1:** Write an argumentative letter to the trial jury, telling them why you think Tom Robinson is innocent. Convince the jury of his innocence, and recommend what you think the jury should do next.

**Choice 2:** Write a retrospective (looking back from the future), argumentative letter to Atticus Finch, discussing whether he should have taken the Tom Robinson case or not. Convince Atticus whether or not the case was worthwhile, and whether he should have acted differently or not.

**Assignment:** Choose one of these options and write the corresponding letter. Include at least 3 strong pieces of evidence from the novel in your letter, and address at least one counterargument. Provide evidence to discourage that counterargument. Be sure to utilize one rhetorical structure that we discussed in class (parallelism, repetition, rhetorical question). You may assume the role of a random citizen of Maycomb County, but write the letter from your own perspective. Use both logical and emotional appeal to convince your audience.

**Your Letter Should:**

- Fit the format of a letter (including addressee, signature, opening, closing, etc.)
- State your main claim, and support that claim with at least 3 pieces of evidence
- Be well organized, introducing a new piece of evidence with a new paragraph, and including an introduction and conclusion that “wrap up” or “sum up” your argument
- Introduce a counterargument, anticipating objections your audience might bring up, and providing evidence against those counterarguments.
- Include one rhetorical structure of persuasive writing.
- Address the audience of your choice.
- Be 2-3 pages, 12 pt. font, 1-inch margins, and cited in MLA format. Cite the evidence you use from the novel with (author, page number).

**Rationale (Why We Are Doing This):**

This assessment will display not only your understanding of the events and characters of the novel, but also your ability to formulate convincing arguments and to engage in the underlying social issues addressed in the novel.

Persuasive Letter Rubric: *To Kill A Mockingbird*  
100 points

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

CATEGORY	Above Standards	Meets Standards	Approaching Standards	Below Standards	Score
<b>Claim/ Position Statement (15 points)</b>	The claim/position statement provides a clear, strong statement of the author's position on the topic. (11-15)	The claim/position statement provides a clear statement of the author's position on the topic. (6-10)	A claim/ position statement is present, but does not make the author's position clear. (1-5)	There is no claim/position statement. (0)	
<b>Support (20 points)</b>	Includes 3 or more pieces of evidence that support the position statement. (16-20)	Includes 3 or more pieces of evidence that support the position statement. (11-15)	Includes 2 pieces of evidence that support the position statement. (6-10)	Includes 1 or fewer pieces of evidence (0-5)	
<b>Evidence and Examples (20 points)</b>	All of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant and explanations are given that show how each piece of evidence supports the author's position. (16-20)	Most of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant and explanations are given that show how each piece of evidence supports the author's position. (11-15)	At least one of the pieces of evidence and examples is relevant and has an explanation that shows how that piece of evidence supports the author's position. (6-10)	Evidence and examples are NOT relevant AND/OR are not explained. (0-5)	
<b>Counter Argument &amp; Rhetorical Devices (15 points)</b>	The writer anticipates the reader's concerns, biases or arguments and has provided at least 1 counter-argument -which he/she addresses with thorough alternative evidence against the counterargument. Student incorporated a rhetorical device discussed in class effectively in letter. (11-15)	Writer provides at least 1 counterargument, but does not offer supporting evidence against the counterargument. Student incorporated rhetorical device discussed in class in letter. (6-10)	Writer either includes a counter argument, <i>or</i> a rhetorical device, but does not include both. (1-5)	Writer does not address counterarguments, and does not include rhetorical device.(0)	

<b>Audience (10 points)</b>	Demonstrates a clear understanding of the potential reader and uses appropriate vocabulary and arguments. Anticipates reader's questions and provides thorough answers appropriate for that audience. (8-10)	Demonstrates a general understanding of the potential reader and uses vocabulary and arguments appropriate for that audience. (5-7)	Demonstrates some understanding of the potential reader and uses arguments appropriate for that audience. (2-4)	It is not clear who the author is writing for. (0-1)	
<b>Letter Format (5 points)</b>	Mirrors letter format perfectly; includes proper headings, addressee, greeting, introductory paragraph, body paragraphs, concluding paragraph/statement, closing, & signature. (5)	Demonstrates a general understanding of letter format, with minor errors/missing elements. (3-4)	Demonstrates some understanding of letter format, but features many errors/deviations/missing elements. (1-2)	Demonstrates little understanding of letter format; does not resemble letter format in any way. (0)	
<b>Grammar &amp; Spelling (5 points)</b>	Author makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content. (5)	Author makes 1-2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content. (3-4)	Author makes 3-4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content. (1-2)	Author makes more than 4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content. (0)	
<b>Sources (10 points)</b>	All sources used for quotes and events from novel are accurate and cited correctly. (8-10)	All sources used for quotes and events from novel are accurate and most are cited correctly. (5-7)	Most sources used for quotes and events from novel are accurate and cited correctly. (2-4)	Many sources are suspect (not credible) AND/OR are not cited correctly. (0-1)	

Final Score: \_\_\_\_\_  
/100 points

Comments: