

- **GENERAL ESSAY FORMAT AND STYLE REQUIREMENTS** -

USE THIS CHECKLIST BEFORE TURNING IN AN ESSAY

- type and double space all papers; margins 1” on all sides; 10-12 pt. plain font
- no unnecessary returns (i.e., no extra space between paragraphs).
- include your name, class, and the date on page one; *no title page, please.*
- a title, centered at top (not half way down the page); **do not** use the name of the book or the assignment topic; avoid the words "paper," "essay," "assignment")
- not a single “I” or “you” statement, except in a personal or autobiographical essay; (includes other forms: *me, my, your*). Minimize use of *we, us* to refer to readers.
- no inappropriate, informal language or slang (e.g., *gonna, hecka, wanna, okay, sucks, lame, alright,*); no email/IM abbreviations (*brb*), spellings (*kewl*), formats (*eNgLiSh*), or “emoticons” like :-), :-(, :-p
- avoid clichés (overused phrases, e.g., *dark as night, out of the loop, rock hard*)
- avoid misuse of *way, very, totally, really, basically, kind of, get, thing, stuff, like, go* (as in, *After the game, he goes “Congratulations!”*)
- should *have*, could *have*, would *have*... **not** *should of, could of*...
- avoid contractions (e.g., *won't, can't, they're, he's, she'd*)
- avoid vague references – (e.g., “This” should be used *with* a noun, not *as* a noun).
- write out numbers up to and including *one-hundred: one, two, three, not 1, 2, 3*; also *first, second, not 1st, 2nd*. For larger numbers, write out simple ones like *three-hundred, six-thousand, two-million*.
- Proofread - you need clear, complete sentences, strong word choices; no grammatical errors; no typos or misspellings; caution! Spell-check programs will not help when you make mistakes like... *there/their, where/were/wear, now/know, weather/whether, your/you're, then/than, affect/effect, though/through*.
- literary present tense – describe all plot/action details of literature in the present, even if the text is in the past tense; (Romeo *loves* Juliet; Curley *yells* at Lennie).

- Use proper format for quotations and citations. See examples and explanations below. (These quotations are invented).

From the moment she appears in the novel, Maudie Atkinson is portrayed as a kind-hearted woman, providing a strong female role model for Scout: "Miss Maudie was the picture of Southern womanhood, and I studied her every move" (14). It is clear that Scout sees this relationship as a learning opportunity.

Boo Radley is misunderstood by the children, who picture him as a monster, "six-and-a-half feet tall with sharp teeth and huge claws, ready to eat the raw flesh of any creature he could catch" (2). Scout's exaggerations of Boo Radley are obviously unrealistic, from a mature viewpoint.

Atticus is skilled at helping the children understand problems. He suggests that "You never really understand a person until you see things from their point of view" (31), which proves helpful to Scout on numerous occasions.

NOTE THAT...

1. Quotations are not necessarily dialogue. Quotations are simply text pulled straight from the source. Dialogue is speech within a story, and it is indicated with the use of quotation marks. The first two quotations are *not* examples of characters talking to each other, although it is acceptable and desirable to quote dialogue (see third example).
2. Quotations are introduced, and are part of the sentence that introduces them. There is a comma or a colon to separate the introduction from the quote itself. Quotations should not begin a paragraph, or start right after a period.
3. Quotations are followed by an explanation, analysis, or commentary. Quotations should not end a paragraph.
4. The page number is in parentheses, and outside the quotation marks. That part of the sentence is called a citation, and the citation is part of the sentence. If the citation is the last part of the sentence, the period follows the citation. If the sentence continues, as in the third example above, a comma can also follow the citation.
5. There is no period inside the close-quotation marks. Periods belong only at the very end of the sentence. There is never a need for an ellipsis (...) at the end of a quotation unless it was in the original text.