

Fourth Quarter Writing Prompts

Prompt 1—Group Identity: One of the qualities that characterizes human beings is our allegiance to the groups with whom we identify. Being part of a group often gives people a deep sense of satisfaction. We love to join teams, clubs, and sororities, and we often take great pride in being from a particular family, working for a particular firm, fighting for the rights of our particular gender, or spreading the beliefs of our particular religious group. But group allegiances, when taken too far, can also lead to bigotry, sexism, racism, classism, and war. **Analyze the effects of group allegiance in Harper Lee’s novel, and in the conclusion of your paper, discuss how you think human beings should best use their group allegiances for good rather than for harm.**

Possible thesis: (Feel free to word this differently.) The effects of group allegiance in Harper Lee’s novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, are often destructive to the lives of the characters.

Possible thesis: The various forms of group allegiance in Harper Lee’s novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, are both destructive and constructive in the lives of the novel’s characters.

Prompt 2—Empathy:

Many philosophers believe that empathy, the ability to imagine and feel one’s self in another’s situation, is at the heart of moral behavior. To what degree do you agree or disagree with this idea? Is it possible to have too much empathy for other people as well as too little? Use characters from Harper Lee’s novel as examples to help you answer this question.

Possible thesis: The characters in Harper Lee’s novel demonstrate the empathy is at the heart of moral behavior.

Possible thesis: The characters in Harper Lee’s novel demonstrate both the power and the limits of empathy as an element of moral behavior.

Prompt 3—Injustice Today:

What is/are the issue(s) of injustice that most compel us to act today? You may pick a single issue and provide three reasons for your choice, or you may pick three issues of injustice and describe each in a body paragraph. Your ideas may come from your own research or from the oral presentations created by your peers.