

***To Kill a Mockingbird* and *The Help*  
Synthesis Essay  
Ruckoldt WOC**

***Essential Questions (that apply to this assessment)***

- How does a writer use elements of fictions to develop a theme?

***Learning Targets (“I can” statements that apply to this assessment)***

- I can construct a claim and support it with clear and logical arguments.
- I can construct an argument and support it with specific evidence from a variety of reliable sources.
- I can write informative/explanatory texts to convey complex ideas and information.
- I can select and apply the appropriate medium (technology), structure, style, and conventions to writing and speaking in order to communicate purpose effectively to readers (audience).
- I can revise and rewrite in order to produce and publish writing for a specific audience and purpose.

***Directions:***

Over the course of the this unit, we have studied Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird* and viewed Kathryn Stockett’s *The Help*. Both works explore the idea of injustice in the segregated South, one in the 1930s in Alabama and one in the 1960s in Mississippi. They also explore the idea of how one person can initiate change within society. Other theme topics explored in the works include the following: isolation, appearance vs. reality, prejudice, loss of innocence, levels of society, and courage.

For this essay, please choose a common thematic message and then analyze how each author uses two elements of fiction (characterization, point-of-view, setting, diction, conflict, motif, or symbol) to support and build this message.

***Thematic message examples)***

Isolation can be destructive.

People need to have connections with other people in order to be happy.

Those at the lower levels of society have the least power and influence over that society.

Those at the top levels of society have the most power and influence over that society.

One person has the power to change an unjust society.

A person can never be judged merely by his or her appearance.

Part of growing up involves learning about the ugly parts of society and people.

Despite their lack of equality, women have more power than men in these societies.

A person’s race determines the amount of power he or she has in society.

Social class determines a person’s identity and place in society.

One courageous act can initiate change in society.

The level of prejudice a person has toward another group depends not only upon the society in

which he or she lives but also upon his or her experiences growing up.

**Prompt Broken into Steps:** 1) Identify Common Thematic Topic between the two works. 2) Create theme statement from the common thematic topic. 3) Choose two elements of fiction (characterization, point-of-view, setting, diction, conflict, motif, or symbol). 4) Analyze how each work uses each of the chosen elements of fiction to create the corresponding thematic message.

**Works Cited entry for movie:**

*The Help*. Dir. Taylor Tate, and Writ. Stockett Kathryn. Dreamworks, 2011. Film. 7 Apr 2014.

**Outcome:**

A polished 5 paragraph essay with an introduction, body of support, and conclusion that includes textual support with parenthetical documentation and a works cited section.