

## Writing a Character Analysis Essay

Think about your overall impressions of Holden Caulfield. What is he like? What are some of his most interesting/meaningful/significant personality traits? Why? Is he a static/flat or dynamic/round character?

Once you've answered the questions of whether or not Holden is a static/flat or dynamic/round character, choose three character traits that explore how he evolves or does not evolve over the course of the novel. This becomes your thesis.

Refer to each section to complete your essay:

### **I. Introduction**

- Hook your reader. Grab their attention!
- Introduce story's title and author:
- Give brief background: What is the story about?
- Thesis: In one to two sentences, state whether Holden is a static or dynamic character and three character traits that explore how he evolves or does not evolve over the course of the novel.

### **II. How is this character revealed at the beginning of the novel?**

- A. What is trait 1? Include the adjective you chose to describe your character.
- B. How do you know? (What do others say about the character? What does the character do? How does the author describe the character?)
  1. Be sure to include 2 quotations from the book (Explain how the quotes illustrate the character trait)
- C. How does this trait affect the story? (How does this trait help or hurt the character's relationships with others? Does it help/hurt him personally? Does it get him into or out of trouble?)
- D. Why?

### **III. How does the character change or not change throughout the course of the novel?**

- A. What is trait 2? Include the adjective you chose to describe your character.
- B. How do you know? Consider changes in action, attitudes, beliefs, or self-concept. (What do others say about the character? What does the character do?)
  1. Be sure to include 2 quotations from the book (Explain how the quotes illustrate the character trait)
- C. How does this trait affect the story? (How does this trait help or hurt the character's relationships with others? Does it help/hurt him personally? Does it get him into or out of trouble?)
- D. If you see Holden as a dynamic character, explain why this change is important to the character.

### **IV. Describe the character at the end of the novel.**

- A. What is trait 3? Include the adjective you chose to describe your character.
- B. How do you know? (What do others say about the character? What does the character do?)
  1. Be sure to include 2 quotations from the book (Explain how the quotes illustrate how or why the character changed or stayed the same.)
- C. How does this trait affect the story? (How does this trait help or hurt the character's relationships with others? Does it help/hurt him personally? Does it get him into or out of trouble?)
- D. Is the final change for better or worse? Why? If there is no change, is that good or bad for the character?

## V. Conclusion

- A. Summarize your main points. Restate your thesis statement, but make sure you reword it. Provide some final, creative thoughts about the character. This is the last paragraph your audience reads, so make it good.
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### Guidelines:

- You need an introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion.
- Your direct quotations should be no more than three lines long each.
- Use an MLA heading and page format.
- The paper must be typed; 12 point font; Times New Roman; one inch margins; double-spaced.
- You must have a creative title. "Character Analysis" does not work.

### Writing Tips:

- Follow TISAS body paragraph format.
- Avoid contractions (can't, won't, etc.) unless in a quotation.
- Don't use slang or common words (thing, stuff, a lot, etc.) unless in quotation.
- Write only in third person. Don't use YOU or I.
- Do not underline or put your title in quotations.
- Use sentence variety (simple, compound, complex).
- Use specific, vivid, and detailed incidents and examples to support your thesis.
- Fix all comma splice errors, run-ons, and sentence fragments.
- Run spell check, but remember that it won't catch the wrong use of words (hear/here, there/their/they're, then/than, to/too/two, etc.)
- Write in the present tense.
- Fix all typing errors.
- Make sure all paragraphs are indented a half an inch.
- Use strong verbs!

### Writing Schedule:

**1) Monday, March 11th**

**Go over rubric**

**2) Wednesday, March 13th**

**3) Friday, March 15th**

**4) Tuesday, March 19th**

**ROUGH DRAFT DUE  
TYPES OF SENTENCES**

**5) Thursday, March 21st**

**FINAL DRAFT DUE**

## OUTLINE STRUCTURE FOR YOUR ESSAY

### I. Catchy Title

### II. Paragraph 1: Introduction

- a. Hook
- b. Author
- c. Title
- d. Essential Background (about the book that prepares reader for thesis)
- e. Thesis

### III. Paragraphs 2/3/4: First/Second/Third Body Paragraphs

- a. **T**opic Sentence (what the paragraph will discuss, leading back to thesis)
- b. **I**ntroduction to Evidence
  - i. Phrase or sentence that prepares the reader for textual evidence by introducing the following:
    1. Who says it?
    2. What's happening in the text when they say it?
- c. **S**upporting Evidence (cited appropriately)
- d. **A**nalysis of Evidence
  - i. What does this textual evidence show or prove and how does it prove your thesis?
- e. **I**ntroduction of More Evidence
- f. **S**upporting Evidence
- g. **A**nalysis of Evidence
- h. **S**ummary (concludes the paragraph by tying the textual evidence and commentary back to the thesis)

### IV. Paragraph 5: Conclusion

- a. **E**cho your thesis without repeating the words exactly.
- b. **C**onnect back to your hook/creative opening.
- c. **S**how why the text is important.

