

Inherit the Wind Final Essay

PROMPT 1. Is it worth it to study *Inherit the Wind* in an effort to learn about American history?

Considering the changes made from history, is there merit in teaching the play in schools? That is, what valuable historical lessons are lost or gained by the changes? Use your nonfiction articles, the text of the play, details of the film and/or your notebook charts as evidence to prove your point.

Your thesis statement:

Given the specific historical changes Lawrence and Lee make in *Inherit the Wind*, there **IS** value in teaching the play in schools because students can still learn about the dangers of not understanding the views they are opposed to and can learn the importance of the right to think and act upon free thoughts.

PROMPT 2. Explore Lawrence and Lee's purpose in making changes to the true history of the Scopes Trial events. What did they want their audience to believe and/or do after seeing *Inherit the Wind*? Use your nonfiction articles, the text of the play, details of the film and/or your notebook charts as evidence to prove your point.

Your thesis statement:

Given the specific historical changes Lawrence and Lee make in *Inherit the Wind*, the playwrights' purpose is to make people aware of the dangers of being ignorant to “different” views and to inspire people to become advocates for free thought and action.

Subtopic #1

- The dangers of not understanding those views that one opposes

Historical Evidence:

In William Jennings closing argument for the Scopes Trial, he expresses that “science needs religion, to direct its energies and to inspire with lofty purposes those who employ the forces that are unloosed by science” (Bryan).

Inherit Evidence:

When Brady admits to Drummond that he has never read Darwin's "On the Origins of Species" Drummond exclaims, "Then how in perdition do you have the gall to whoop up this holy war against something you don't know anything about? How can you be so cocksure that the body of scientific knowledge systematized in the writings of the Charles Darwin is, in any way, irreconcilable with the spirit of the Book of Genesis? (Lawrence & Lee 86).

Subtopic #2

-the importance of having the right to think and act upon those thoughts

Historical Evidence:

In his closing argument to defend Leopold and Loeb, Clarence Darrow explained that the right to think will enable people to “learn by reason and judgment and understanding and faith that all life is worth saving, and that mercy is the highest attribute of man” (Darrow).

Inherit Evidence:

Rachel exclaims, “I’ve read it. All the way through. I don’t understand it. What I do understand, I don’t like...But I think that’s besides the point” (Lawrence & Lee 124).

Analysis of evidence:

- Discuss the real, historical facts
- Discuss the change Lawrence and Lee made
- Then discuss why the changes were made (valuable lesson? playwrights' purpose?)

Your opening statements:

1. Should be a few sentences (three)
2. Should not mention the Scopes Trial or *Inherit the Wind*
3. Should discuss the larger ideas you will be addressing in your essay (your subtopics and valuable lessons)
4. Should smoothly transition to the Scopes Trial and *Inherit the Wind*

Your conclusion:

1. Reflect on your thesis
2. Mention your sub-topics
3. End with broad statements that include some new insight or idea related to your topic.

