

We have been reading and discussing Of Mice and Men for the last few weeks, mainly through the lens of character analysis. We have also considered some of the important themes in the book such as friendship, loneliness, power, race, gender, and the ownership of land and how these affect how a human being sees the world and how the world sees him or her.

In history, you have been looking at the various river civilizations. One of the important building blocks of any "civilized" society is its law or code of ethics (think of Hammurabi's code).

This next writing assignment asks you to make a persuasive argument using evidence quoted from Of Mice and Men to support your point of view.

TASK: Answer the following question in a well written, well organized, well supported, persuasive essay of no more than two typed, double spaced pages:

WHO IS THE MOST RESPONSIBLE FOR LENNIE'S DEATH? While many characters are responsible in one way or another, the question is WHO is the MOST responsible?

Because this assignment is the first formal essay you are writing for this English class, I will be helping you with several of the steps you need to take. For this essay, you will NOT write an introduction or a conclusion; you will only write a THESIS and two or three BODY PARAGRAPHS that support that thesis. These are the most important parts of any formal argument; we'll talk about introductions and conclusions later!

STEP ONE: BRAINSTORM! --You just did that! ☺ Now you should know who you blame.

STEP TWO: WRITE A THESIS

A thesis should be specific, focused and directed. It should be specific enough to indicate exactly what you will be proving, and yet broad enough to be broken into parts. It should act as a "road map" of the essay to follow, as it tells your reader exactly what to expect in the essay he or she is about to read.

We will be talking more about all of this in the next few days, but for now:

**Your THESIS STATEMENTS and SUBTHESIS STATEMENTS are due tomorrow,
at our next class!**

For example, if I were writing a thesis based on the same questions as above, except I was substituting Tessie Hutchinson (from *The Lottery*), I might have a thesis something like this:

Thesis: Old Man Warner is most responsible for the death of Tessie Hutchinson because whenever anyone tries to stop the ritual recounted in the short story *The Lottery*, by Shirley Jackson, he forces that person to honor the tradition in three ways: by repeating the lottery's supposed connection to the wealth of the harvest; by ridiculing that person's evidence of other towns which have stopped the lottery; and by embarrassing that person by making him look as if he is disrespecting his elders.

The **focus** of this thesis is Old Man Warner. Every part of the thesis revolves around him and aims to prove he is most responsible for the continuation of the lottery.

The **direction** of the thesis is what is called a "**reason and examples**" direction. The reason , I am arguing. That Old Man Warner is most responsible for Tessie Hutchinson's death is because other younger people in the story seem to be willing to stop this tradition. If the lottery were stopped, Tessie Hutchinson would have never been killed by her neighbors. Therefore, Old Man Warner, and people like him who we probably don't meet in the short story, is keeping the tradition alive in this town by exerting pressure on the other people in town. The examples to support this statement can be drawn from Old Man Warner's conversations with various townspeople during the picking of the pieces of paper. I allude to these examples in my thesis. By explaining these examples, showing how they are inter-related, and showing how each one supports my reason, I will be proving, in a logical way, my point of view.

Step Two: After your thesis is approved and handed back to you, you will need to have a thesis outline approved. Due Date_____

You should follow the exact format of this sample thesis outline provided below:

Thesis: Old Man Warner is most responsible for the death of Tessie Hutchinson because whenever anyone tries to stop the ritual recounted in the short story *The Lottery*, by Shirley Jackson, he forces that person to honor the tradition in three ways: by repeating the lottery's supposed connection to the wealth of the harvest; by ridiculing that person's evidence of other towns which have stopped the lottery; and by embarrassing that person by making him look as if he is disrespecting his elders.

- I.** Old Man Warner forces the younger members of the town to honor the tradition of the lottery by repeating the lottery's supposed connection to the wealth of the harvest.
Quotation #1:
Quotation #2
- II.** Old Man Warner forces the younger members of the town to honor the tradition of the lottery by ridiculing their evidence that other towns have stopped the lottery.
Quotation #1:
Quotation #2
- III.** Old Man Warner forces the younger members of the town to honor the tradition of the lottery by embarrassing them and making them look as if they are disrespecting their elders.
Quotation #1:
Quotation #2

Using your original thesis outline, find a quotation that supports every statement you have made and place that quotation under the appropriate roman numerals.