

# Critical Essay Keyhole Style

Essays are arguments. Have something to argue.

Question Frame for Critical Essays:

What idea does the author develop regarding relationships?

← Theme word

# Thesis statements

Thesis statements answer the question.

What idea does Harper Lee develop regarding sibling relationships?

Two types are available.

***Tell-all Thesis statement:***  
**In her novel, To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee develops the idea that the relationship between brother and sister is one based on rivalry and tolerance, affection, and protectiveness.**

Umbrella Thesis: Harper Lee contends that the brother/sister relationship endures all challenges.

# INTRODUCTION

Between Siblings

Philosophy

In a world replete with social relationships, one deserves special mention--the relationship between brother and sister. This type of relationship is portrayed in *To Kill a Mockingbird* by two of the main characters, Jeremy (Jem) and Jean Louise (Scout) Finch. Their loving relationship faces many challenges. **In her novel, To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee develops the idea that the relationship between brother and sister is one based on rivalry and tolerance, affection, and protectiveness.**

Plot

THESIS

# Body paragraph

Assertion **Jem and Scout's relationship contains elements of rivalry and tolerance.** Rivalry can be found in every brother and sister

Comment →

relationship; this holds true for the Finches. "We were far too old to settle an argument with a fist-fight, so we consulted Atticus. Our father said we were both right." (p. 3) The siblings

*Quote* →

were competing with one another in order for each to try and prove him/her self correct. **However**, not all time is spent in competition, so there is also the element of tolerance present. It is not necessary to like a sibling, instead each can learn to tolerate the other. Jem tolerates many of Scout's actions.

*Woven quote* →

When she tags along and inconveniences his plans he allows her to, although he is not always happy about it and says to her, "... for the last time, shut your trap or go home..." (p. 51) For Jem, having Scout tag along is not always pleasurable; nevertheless, she is his sister so he must tolerate her. **Sibling**

**Link  
Back** →

relations are not the easiest, and it is possible to see how rivalry and tolerance fit into the equation.

# Concluding Paragraph

Restate  
Thesis

In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Lee develops the idea that the relationship between a brother and sister encompasses rivalry and tolerance, affection, and protectiveness. In the novel, Scout and Jem display how a relationship between brother and sister have many distinguished elements, but love is the one that shines through. **A brother and sister relationship is barely fathomable, due to the complexity that binds siblings together.**

*Summary*

Philosophy

Notice how the philosophy tries to move out from the novel and extrapolate the lessons into everyone's life.