

QEJ Graphic Organizer: Instructions

As we prepare for our *To Kill a Mockingbird* essay, we will use this Quadruple Entry Journal (QEJ) graphic organizer to find, explain, and analyze evidence for our thesis. Used properly, these will be tools for crafting the body of the essay.

You will complete 6 QEJs before you start the essay. Fill out Boxes A, B, and C on your own. **Wait until you are in GROUPS to fill out BOX D.**

(If you find that one of the quotes no longer works, do not feel obliged to use it in your paper. None of the quotes are required to be in the essay, although it is suggested you use some.)

Topic/ Thesis

Remember, a topic is a general theme or idea. A thesis is an *argument*. If you do not have a thesis yet, just put down the topic. Your group will help you decide on an argument later.

Topics—Choose 1 for all 6 quotes

- The effects of prejudice on the individual (Choose specific characters)
- The effects of prejudice on the community (Choose specific institutions—i.e., courts, schools, churches)
- The source of prejudice (Examine specific characters)
- Overcoming prejudice (Examine specific characters)
- The link between prejudice and persecution (Examine specific characters)

Box A: Evidence

Your *quote* from the text.

This is the center of your argument. Please only use quotes from *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

- Pick the strongest quotes.
 - The length should be at least a sentence up to a full paragraph. It needs to be long enough to give you something to analyze.
 - If you shorten quotes, use [...] to show where you cut out words. These cuts should NOT change the meaning of the quotes.
- ❖ Example of Bad Shortening
Original Quote: “I do not like lima bean.”
Cut quote: “I [...] like lima beans.”
- Practice citation. (Put the author’s last name and the page number in parenthesis after the quote.)

Box B: Context

What is *happening* around the quote.

Context is the background information necessary to give the quote meaning. Like a summary, you will need to tell the who, what, where, when of the situation. You can use background information to introduce, but it can also be used as part of the evidence.

Be as *brief* as possible; choose *only* the most important information.

Consider:

- Who is the speaker? (Remember that if no one is saying the quote, the speaker is Scout.)
- Who is the audience? If someone is saying this quote out loud, who is he/ she saying it to?
- What has happened directly before the quote? What prompts these words to be spoken or thought?
- What happens after the quote? Does the quote prompt a certain action or result?
- When does the quote take place? Beginning, middle, or end of book?
- Where does the quote take place?

Box C: Explanation/ Analysis

How the quote *supports* your thesis/ topic.

Analysis is the deeper meaning of the quote. You are looking at why the author wrote this and what she's trying to say. Explanation is what ties the quote to your argument—how does the evidence prove that you are right.

This box makes up the bulk of your essay, so make sure you do a *thorough* job.

Consider:

- How does the quote and its context relate to the topic?
- What is the core meaning or message of the quote? What is it trying to say about prejudice?
- How does the quote prove your argument? (If you don't have an argument yet, what argument can you make from the quote?)

Box D: Suggestions

What *your group* thinks of your evidence, context, explanation, and analysis.

DO NOT FILL THIS BOX OUT ON YOUR OWN

You will discuss what you've written in Boxes A, B, and C in your group, and your peers will offer critique. Please write down any problems the group has and at least 2 suggestions. You do not need to need to take their advice for your actual essay, but you should make an effort to fix any problems that come up.

When critiquing someone's work, consider:

Box A

- Does the quote make sense for topic?
- Is it too long or too short? If so, how can it be cut or lengthened?
- If shortened, does the quote still mean the same thing as the long version?

Box B

- Does the context help you understand the quote? If not, what needs to be added?
- Is the context an appropriate length? If it is too long, what is the most essential information and what can be cut? If it is too short, what needs to be added?

Box C

- Does the explanation make sense?
- If you didn't know the thesis (if they don't have a thesis), what would you think they were trying to prove?
- Is the meaning of the quote correct? If not, how do you know it's not correct? What is the correct meaning?
- Is there enough analysis? If not, what else could you say about it?

Overall

- Do they have the foundation for a strong argument?
- How would you analyze or explain the quote?
- What arguments or counter-arguments can be made?
- Can you suggest any other quotes for next time?