

A Separate Peace Essay

Introduction

John Knowles' novel *A Separate Peace* is the story of Gene Forrester who struggles to come to grips with the guilt over his role in a traumatic event from his childhood. The novel, told as a flashback by an adult Gene, looks back on his friendship with a private school classmate and Gene's destructive feelings of jealousy, fear, and anger.

Assignment

Using the events from the book *after* chapter four, **trace** the journey by which Gene comes to grips with his true feelings about what happened. In your essay:

- Identify at least 3 significant events he experiences after chapter four
- Explain the feelings he wrestles with throughout the course of his journey
- Analyze what he learns about himself by the end of the novel

The object of this essay is to connect the major events of the novel and his reactions to them/interpretations about them with the perspective he's gained as an adult. You need to decide upon the states or steps of his development which make up his journey and determine what he eventually learns by the end of the novel. It is imperative that passages and analysis from the book's **final chapter** are used to illustrate the final stage of his growth.

Structure

You might want to think of a five-paragraph structure, but because of the length requirements, you may need to expand on that to adequately explore your topic.

Intro: This should include a "hook," background information, and a thesis. It should clearly lay out what you are going to discuss in your essay.

Body: Provide analysis and supporting evidence. Mention several key events or moments from the novel that show a different stage or step of his journey. Include at least three carefully chosen quotes to help capture his reactions/feelings about them and connect to larger ideas from the novel. Use the ICE method.

Conclusion: Finalize your argument with final thoughts related to the main idea and/or the hook.

Reminders: This is a literary essay so there should be no uses of "I" or "you." Include an original title to capture interest.

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Requirements

Your essay should have the following:

- ✓ A clear argument of opinion and purpose expressed in a thesis statement and introduction.
- ✓ Numerous accurate supporting details and events from the novel that directly back up your opinions.
- ✓ At least three (probably more) properly cited quotes from the (each) novel.
- ✓ Accurate and insightful analysis of the novel.
- ✓ Generally correct grammar and mechanics.

Honors Option essay topics

Honors option #1: By focusing on the major conflicts in both *A Separate Peace* and *The Kite Runner*, write an essay that compares the two novels and what their central message is. You will support your thesis by selecting specific examples from both novels and then discussing which novel presents the most accurate representation of true human nature. Your essay must include sufficient analysis of both novels. Since you are comparing the novels, you need to craft a thesis that explores subtle or significant similarities or differences in the stories.

Honors option #2: Both *A Separate Peace* and *The Kite Runner* tell the story of a narrator who struggles to come to grips with the guilt over his role in a traumatic event from his childhood. Using the events from both books, draw parallels between the coming of age journey undertaken by the main characters. Since the object of this essay is to show how both narrators get from POINT A to POINT B, you need to decide upon the stages or steps of development which make up their journeys and what they eventually learn. It is imperative that you use telling quotes and analysis from the book's final chapters are used to illustrate the final stage of growth.

* If you have any suggestions or alternative topics, please see me.