Research Paper for To Kill a Mockingbird

Assignment
You will write research paper about a historical topic that is related to Harper Lee’s novel, To Kill a Mockingbird.

Purpose
Your paper will be both informative and argumentative. You will not only provide readers with information about your topic, but you will also make a subjective argument when you attempt to connect your topic to the events or the timeline of To Kill a Mockingbird.

Due Dates:
Rough Draft—May 11 (A day), May 12 (B day)
Final Draft—May 19 (A day), May 20 (B day)

Topics
You will write your paper about one of the following topics, all of which are connected to the historical era (early to mid-20th century) in which To Kill a Mockingbird is set:

- Jim Crow Laws
- The Ku Klux Klan
- Plessy vs. Ferguson
- The Great Depression
- The Dust Bowl
- Herbert Hoover vs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
- The Rise of Hitler and the Nazis
- W.E.B. Dubois and the NAACP
- Booker T. Washington and the Tuskegee Institute
- Brown vs. the Board of Education
- The history of capital punishment
- The 6th amendment
- The 8th amendment
- The Great Migration
- The Harlem Renaissance
- The Black Church in the South
- Harper Lee’s Biography
- The role of women in 1930s South
- Civil Rights Defenders for Blacks

A PDF listing these topics, with discussion questions that might help you generate an outline for a rough draft, can be accessed in one of three ways:

1. Under the “homework” tab on my web site: www.markmichaelson.weebly.com
2. By googling “to kill a mockingbird research paper topics” and clicking on the FIRST link that comes up.
3. Through a folder created by Mr. Williamson; you can access this when you are on the computer in Mr. Williamson’s class.
Requirements

A minimum of three pages long (approximately 900 words)

MLA format:
1. 1" margins
2. Name block including your name, instructor’s name, the class (English 1101), and the date
3. Header should be in top right corner of every page and include your last name and page number
4. Double-spaced, Times New Roman font

A minimum of THREE sources to be cited both in the text of your essay, as well as in a works cited page

1. The sources will be selected from among those provided for you with the research topics.
2. These sources will NOT include the novel, which many of you will need to cite in your essay.
3. If you want to use a source that is not included among those available, you will need to get permission from me.
Grading Rubric for Research Papers

*Plagiarism will earn a ZERO on the entire paper—each phase of the assignment will be reduced to zero credit.*

Each of the following is worth up to 25 points:

1. **Introduction**—the opening paragraph should accomplish two goals: 1) Engage readers and compel them to want to keep reading; 2) Communicate the paper’s thesis in a strong, clear voice.

2. **Evidence**—the thesis is supported by quality, convincing, relevant evidence. This standard is applied to evidence that is provided by the writer, as well as that which the writer uses from other sources.

3. **Analysis**—the writer offers analysis that goes beyond the basic level of simply regurgitating information; the writer demonstrates that he or she has really analyzed their topic, its relationship to the novel, and attempted to make insightful comments (rather than stating the obvious).

4. **Organization**—the writer presents his or her argument in a logical order that maximizes the effectiveness and coherence of their paper. A well-organized essay will have strong paragraphs that have a clear focus and serve a specific function; these paragraphs will also have smooth transitions.

5. **Use of Citations/Works cited**—the writer will use citations when appropriate and/or necessary. The in-text citations and works cited page will be properly formatted according to MLA standards.

6. **Grammar/Word Choice/Coherence**—the writer will have a minimum of grammatical errors, poor word choices, or any other mistakes that will hurt the coherence of their paper and or their credibility as a writer.

*With these six categories at 25 points apiece, plus 25 points for the rough draft, and 25 points for peer review of said rough draft, the total value of this assignment is 200 points.*