Sample Introduction

Ninth grade Humanities explores the journey of heroes in the assigned novels. In each of these novels, conflict plays an important role, because conflict is the catalyst for each character’s actions, and because conflict helps enhance thematic inclusion. In *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time,* by Mark Haddon, Christopher Boone becomes more mature, specifically independent, because of his response to internal and external conflicts. Haddon’s story reinforces the theme that it is only through self-understanding that one might grow as a person. The novel helps the reader to understand that each person, while different, undergoes the same stages in life’s journey.

Sample Body Paragraph

Christopher Boone, a child on the autism spectrum, matures as a result of many external conflicts. These conflicts also reinforce Haddon’s theme, that self-understanding allows for personal growth. When Christopher is interrogated by the policeman in Mrs. Shears’ yard following the discovery of Wellington’s body, the policeman “took hold of [Christopher’s] arm and lifted [him] onto his feet…this is when [Christopher] hit him” (Haddon 8). Christopher might have learned that the police are there to investigate the death of beloved Wellington; however, the police completely forget about the dog and arrest Christopher for assaulting the police officer. After this event, Christopher learns that because he’s different from others, he must work hard to understand why others act a certain way. This realization leads him to understand that since the problems he has with others come from within, he must work on his own to conquer these struggles, making him more independent. Christopher’s external conflict with the policeman illustrates the positive effect that the conflict has on him.

CS: Christopher’s reactions to external conflicts positively influence his growth, as do his responses to internal conflict.

Sample Conclusion

Christopher Boone experiences many internal and external conflicts in Mark Haddon’s *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. His responses to these conflicts prove that he has matured as a result of these experiences; he’s become more independent. These conflicts also enhance Haddon’s theme of personal struggle and its effect on growth—it is only through struggle that anyone may learn important life lessons. Haddon chose to show a boy who struggles with conflict in order to demonstrate to his audience that even though we are all unique, we all struggle with authority, family, and the “truths” on our life’s journey. Haddon’s hope is that we learn from Christopher’s inability to relate to the world, and learn to embrace the quirks of those around us.