



## **Sample Essay Writing**

**Below you will see some sample essays that earned A's written by students in high school.**

### **The Silent Journey**

Tap! Tap! Potter wakes up, feeling someone repeatedly tapping him. Turning around to the backside of his bed, he sees a little girl, hardly seven years old and as cute as a doll, looking at him with big tears rolling down from her eyes and onto her cheeks. Surprised and sympathetic towards the little girl, whom he had never seen before, he took her to the kitchen of his small apartment and gave her some cereal. The little girl looked at the bowl and started munching cereal voraciously. As the little girl was eating, Potter looked at the girl with great curiosity. He asked himself, "How did this little girl come inside my apartment? Why is she here? Where are her parents? Why was she crying?"

After the girl was done eating, he asked her, "What is your name?" He received no response. He then asked her while acting out his question, "How did you get here?" He still received no answer. The girl signaled to him that she couldn't talk. Shocked for a minute, Potter was silent. Then he again asked, "What is your name?" She signaled her name to him, but he couldn't understand. Potter got an idea to let the girl write her name, but soon he realized that the little girl was of Chinese origin and only knew the Chinese language. Potter was slowly getting alarmed about why he is trying to help her. In a few minutes, she signaled to him what had happened to her. She was from a small city in China, where her parents are from and currently live. Her mom was taking her by train to India to visit a church where she had heard that whatever you ask for, you shall receive. On the way there, she got off the train at a station, while her mother was sleeping, because she saw a small animal. Before she knew it, the train left, and she was left alone in New Delhi, India, with no one for her. She signaled that after that, she has been through a lot, including being kidnapped, escaping, trying to go to a place where the Chinese made trips to China (an embassy, Potter soon realized), and ending up in here now in Mumbai after six months. She was able to enter Potter's apartment because she saw him at the grocery store and followed him.

The little girl's story touched Potter, but he didn't know what to do. He was in a dilemma as if he was making a decision like Odysseus made of going to the Trojan War. After thinking about it, he made his decision to bring the girl back to her home in China. He decided to talk to his mother before making a decision. She advised him to do what he thinks is best for himself as well as the girl. Thinking about his mother's words, even though he had no clue about what he was doing, he booked tickets to Shanghai, China, and took the little girl there.

Once they reached Shanghai, Potter felt as if he were Odysseus on the island of the Phaeacians, unknown of where everything is located and what to do. Potter asked the little girl, "Have you ever been here before?" The girl signaled that she had once and also that she is hungry. Potter reached in his pocket to get some money and realized that he had lost his passport. Worried for a little while, Potter thought that he would think about that later, focusing right now



on getting the little girl home. He gave the girl momos from a small restaurant and went on a bus to see if they would reach any city that the girl recognized. As they were on the bus, the girl recognized one city. Potter quickly asked the driver to stop the bus, hopped off, and went with the little girl into the city. As they were entering the city, a few police guards found him suspicious. They asked Potter for his passport and found out that he didn't have it. They started interrogating him, and Potter responded, "This little girl is from here, but she can't talk." The police, very skeptical at this point, concluded that Potter was an illegal intruder who was using the girl to stay in China. All of a sudden, Potter ran and took the girl with him. He told her to look for other people she knew and said that he would go a separate way than her. They both parted ways, but the police kept chasing Potter till they caught him and locked him up. He was trapped in the jail cell-like Odysseus trapped in the Cyclops' cave.

After running as fast as the wind for 1 hour in the city, the girl reached her home and found her parents, who were happy and surprised at the same time. They covered her with kisses. Her parents found out what happened to Potter and wanted to help him. They decided to make a video about what happened and post it on the internet. When the video was uploaded, it went viral, and all the people were praising Potter for his bravery. He became a shining star in the eyes of the public. The police saw the video and decided to release him and send him back to his home.

After a few days, Potter returned home, and he felt like a new man. He realized that he likes helping people. He decided to start an orphanage to help little children who are in need. He was successfully able to open the orphanage, and he spent the rest of his life with small children like that sweet little girl he had met when he was only 22 years old.

#### Works Cited:

Fitzgerald, Robert. *The Odyssey: Translated by Robert Fitzgerald*. Vintage Digital, 2010.

#### Feedback:

- This is a narrative essay.
- It takes a modern day story and alludes to the Odyssey.
- It has a strong hook from the beginning by using onomatopoeia.
- It has the structure of a proper essay!
- The story incorporates dialogue and narration.



## Analysis of “Daddy” by Sylvia Plath

In her poems, Sylvia Plath revealed darkness beyond seemingly happy or normal facades, as she was a part of the Confessional movement. The poem, “Daddy,” has no complete rhyme scheme, it is free verse. There is some end rhyme, with many lines ending with an “oo” sound. Sylvia Plath’s father, Otto Plath, died of gangrene when she was 8, so this poem could have been to help her come to peace with the memories she had of him, and express how she struggled to detach from him. She compares her experiences with him to the holocaust, using this to express her feelings. In the poem, she refers to her father as a Nazi, but he was an author/professor, and some have said he was also a kind man, not a cold controlling type as he is portrayed in the poem. The poem has a bitter tone, meant to express Plath’s feelings for the men in her life that have treated her wrong, like her cold, distant, father and her cheating husband.

The first stanza sets the tone for the poem, setting up a feeling of being in a constricted space and wanting to die for a long time. Repetition in the first line is reminiscent of a scolding from an authority figure. The second line combined with the first makes for a grim statement of a theme common in Plath’s poems: wanting to die, especially combined with the first three words of the third line, “For thirty years,” the age Plath was when she killed herself. The 5th line symbolizes a sense of tightness and unhappiness using the symbol of a foot in an uncomfortable black shoe.

The second stanza delves into a description of the speaker’s father, describing his physical state before death as “with one gray toe / Big as a Frisco seal” (10) as he died of gangrene related to untreated diabetes. The speaker describes him as a statue referring to his coldness towards her. The speaker describes his coffin as “a bag full of God,” giving a sense of admiration from the speaker towards their father, despite the other statements. Due to the frustration of not knowing her father, the speaker writes, “Daddy, I have had to kill you. / You died before I had time--” (6-7). The speaker wants to get rid of her father from her memory (because she goes through so much mental struggle over him), but cannot eradicate him from her memory due to the fact that she never got to know him, and never will, because he is dead.

The following stanza is a little less heavy, talking about the place the speaker grew up in, Nauset, and the beautiful oceans there. Her father’s memory intrudes here as well in her happy “beautiful” (13) memories of Nauset. “a head in the freakish Atlantic” (11) refers to her father, and that he was an important figure in her life. She used to pray to recover him (14), because she missed their time together as a family in Nauset.

The fourth stanza is the beginning of her many references to the holocaust in the poem, the speaker uses repetition of the word “Jew” to emphasize how she is being treated (16-17). In the fifth stanza, the speaker talks about places where Nazi influence was strong, and how although they appeared and were considered by Nazis to be pure, they were not (18-19). The speaker talks of her “gipsy ancestress,” “weird luck,” and Tarot cards, saying she is unlucky like the Jews were, and she might as well be one (20-22).

In the sixth stanza, she restates her perpetual fear of him (23). Through the next few lines she describes a Nazi during WWII, using “Luftwaffe,” the WWII German airforce branch, “neat mustache,” a characteristic of Hitler, “Aryan eye,” Aryan was considered an ideal race to the Nazis. An aryan eye is blue. She uses “panzer-man,” the term for a German tank driver, to add to all this, but also to reinforce a previous point. “Panzer” itself means armor,



therefore this is another statement on her father's cold nature towards her (24-27). In the seventh stanza the speaker talks about how the swastika, the Nazi symbol, covers up her sky, saying it replaces god. This represents her need for someone to look up to, a man who she feels should be similar to god, her father, yet all she sees when she looks is a swastika (28-29). A feminist element comes in on line 30, when the speaker writes, "Every woman adores a Fascist," but throughout the rest of the poem she shows disrespect toward her cold, controlling, distant father, showing that she does not adore him. On lines 31-32 the speaker utilizes consonance with the "t" sound of the word "boot" and 3 repetitions of the word "brute," enforcing the idea of his brutal nature.

In line 33, "You stand at the blackboard, daddy" is accurate to Plath's own father, Otto, as he was a professor. Line 34 reinforces her not knowing him well with the line, "In the picture I have of you" implying this is one of her sole memories of his appearance. Lines 35-38 describe him as a devil in disguise who broke her heart. Cleft feet have an inhuman and more demon-like appearance, and cleft chins are sometimes considered handsome. His cleft chin in her memory is not a cleft foot, although it might as well be according to the speaker, as her father is the devil.

Lines 39-53 show the speaker's confusion over her father's identity further, as all she seems to know is that his town had a lot of war, shown by her repetition of the word "war" 3 times in line 41. She knows the name, but it is too common, and she cannot find it on the map. She can't find his roots, so she can't connect with him, he hides everything from her. Lines 48-53 express how she couldn't even talk to him, everytime she tried, "The tongue stuck in my jaw / It stuck in a barb wire snare." (48-49). The snare is a reference to Nazi concentration camps with barbed wire fencing. In line 50 the speaker uses repetition to further validate her hardly being able to speak, repeating "ich," which translates to "I," as if she's trying to tell him something about herself but can't because she can't find him.

In lines 54-56, she describes an engine taking her to Concentration camps to further show how her father pushes her away. In line 57, contrary to her real life, Plath as the speaker writes, "was 10 when they buried you." Line 58 tells how she tried to die at 20, in real life, Plath left a note saying she was going on a long walk and instead tried to O.D. on sleeping pills. As she wrote this poem at 30, she was probably just trying to put together an even trilogy of events. She says she tried to die to see him again (59). In lines 61-62 the speaker describes her visit to the hospital after her attempt as, "But they pulled me out of the sack, / And they stuck me together with glue," meaning she went to a psychiatric hospital. During the concluding lines, 63-80, she builds a model of him, mentions him being a Nazi again while she is making the model, and says a goodbye to his memory. She cuts off her metaphorical telephone to him. She uses the word "worm" cleverly in line 70, "The voices just can't worm through" to mean she won't think about him anymore, but also referring to the worms in his grave in the ground. She calls him a vampire, further emphasizing the idea of him draining her life. In line 76, she reinforces again how he is completely dead, with the statement, "There's a stake in your fat black heart" as that is one way to kill a vampire. She ends the poem on line 80 with a strong, "Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through." The meaning of this line is very clear.

The general tone of every poem in the collection "Ariel" is bitter. "Daddy," among others, was written in a one month period after Plath had separated from her husband, Ted Hughes. She hit a creative rush, but was also extremely depressed at this point, leading to extremely dark and bitter poems, many about the negative male influence in her life. These



poems became very famous after her death 5 months later. Poems such as “Lady Lazarus” and “Daddy” compared her to a Jew and her father and husband to Nazis, a comparison many critics found offensive. Associating herself and the men in her life with Jews and Nazis gives you insight into her identity. This comparison shows she was mentally unstable and may or may not have been abused by her father, because other sources who did not stick their heads in ovens, such as her mother, have made statements contradictory to hers, such as saying she was reading while writing the bell jar, while she said she was not. “Daddy” is full of confusion about identity, as the speaker does not know her father’s. Plath believed in showing her identity through bold comparisons, and was not afraid to show the darker side of life.

### Works Cited

Arp, Thomas R., Greg Johnson, and Laurence Perrine. *Perrine's Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense*. 10th ed. Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2009. Print.

Solsek, Michael, Don Share, and James Sitar, eds. *Poetry!* n.d.: n. pag. *Poetry Foundation*. Poetry Foundation. Web. 28 Mar. 2016.

### Feedback:

- This is an expository essay.
- It hooks the reader by sharing a fact relevant to the essay.
- It keeps the reader engaged throughout.
- Follows the structure of a well-written essay
- Has a very smooth conclusion transition



## Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde Essay

Human nature is the collection of various characteristics, such as ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. Humans are said to have inherited human nature naturally. Human nature is what primarily chooses our actions and makes us unique. It makes us different from all other creatures on Earth and allows us to create, reason, and experience a range of emotions. One such capacity is found in no other form of life. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, a novella written by Robert Louis Stevenson, primarily focuses on human nature and the dual personality that some humans possess. Through the book, Stevenson tells us that the nature of human nature is absolute and cannot change no matter what happens, and all humans can do to control human nature is research and make assumptions about it.

In Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, the character of Dr. Jekyll is a doctor who wants to find more information about human nature. Jekyll discovers that if he creates and develops a particular potion, “life would be relieved of all that was unbearable... and they could walk steadfastly and securely on his upward path, and no longer exposed to disgrace and penitence by the hands of this extraneous evil” (Stevenson 112). If this potion ends up working, he can make all of the people in society purely good, and there will be no evil in the world. Dr. Jekyll finally creates and “with a strong glow of courage, drank off the potion” (Stevenson 113). Instead of becoming purely good, he turns into Mr. Hyde, who is the complete opposite of Dr. Jekyll. The potion ends up taking the less known characteristic of him, which is evil and prioritized it in his personality. Dr. Jekyll develops a split personality between him and Mr. Hyde. His dual identity consists of all the characteristics of his nature-good and bad.

Apart from what Dr. Jekyll tested, there have been many independent scientific investigations on the nature of human nature. Different people have different philosophies about human nature. The contrasting philosophies consist of the Classical Greek philosophy, Chinese philosophy, Christian philosophy, Early Modern philosophy, and Contemporary philosophy. Each of the philosophies believes that man and its nature are meant to be the way that they are for a specific reason. Human nature alludes to the different characteristics such as ways of thinking, feeling, and acting, which humans tend to possess naturally independently of the influence of culture, society, and traditions. Many people research and make assumptions about human nature because it is known. However, no matter how hard we try, human nature will not change, and it is permanently with humans since birth.

Dr. Jekyll decided to conduct an experiment with the intent to change human nature. He thought that human nature could change with his scientific reasoning. Science can prove innumerable subjects of concern, but it can fix only some of those. Human nature is one of those subjects of matter that cannot be changed no matter how many experiments are conducted by scientists. We are born with specific characteristics of human nature, and we ultimately will die with those same characteristics. Even if we try to completely change ourselves, similarly to what Dr. Jekyll was doing, we will not be helping ourselves. If anything, we will digress from our goal, just as Dr. Jekyll did.

The nature of human nature cannot change, no matter what we do. The fact that we cannot change human nature was supported in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Dr. Jekyll tried tirelessly to try to change it using chemicals and science, but he instead ended up taking his life. Human nature still has many loopholes and research to be done, yet we still know so much about how



our minds work. We also know so much about how our peers' minds work as well. The nature of human nature is always a topic that there will be no end of discovery.

**Citations:**

“Humans, Nature, and Ethics.” *Center for Humans & Nature*,  
<https://www.humansandnature.org/humans-nature-and-ethics>.

“Nature of Humanity.” *Nature of Humanity: The Official Site of the Seventh-Day Adventist World Church*, <https://www.adventist.org/en/beliefs/humanity/nature-of-humanity/>.

Stevenson, Robert Louis. *Dr Jekyll And Mr. Hyde*. Baker Street Pr, 2020.

**Feedback:**

- This is a descriptive essay.
- It hooks the reader by stating an interesting fact relevant to the essay topic.
- The author incorporated quotes from the novella as well as outside evidence to support their thesis (made at the end of the 1st paragraph).
- The conclusion paragraph wrapped up the author's point very nicely and made their thesis clear.





## The Côte d'Ivoire and Chocolate. A Toxic Relationship?

Children, as young as five years old, work 12 hour days on cocoa farms in Côte d'Ivoire. They work with machetes and chainsaws, and with every strike they make comes the risk of cutting themselves. After they cut the bean pods from the trees, they pack them into sacks weighing over 100 pounds, and drag them through the forest (Food Empowerment Group, 2015). Meanwhile, rich people in Europe, Asia, and the Americas make money off their efforts, while the cocoa laborers are paid incredibly low wages (Valiño, 2015), even though 38% of cocoa comes from Côte d'Ivoire (Background Essay, 2016). 74% of the supposedly “protected” forests in Côte d'Ivoire have been chopped down to make way for illegal cocoa farms, taking away the homes of countless primates (Platt, 2015). For the Ivory Coast, the detriments of the chocolate industry outway the benefits.

Is the suffering of these children worth your chocolate? Most child laborers on cocoa farms are 12-16, but some are as young as five years old. Due to intense poverty in Western Africa, children are forced to work whatever jobs they can to support their families. The pay is very low. The children work long hours (typically from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.) doing dangerous jobs involving machetes and chainsaws. Many of these children have scars from accidentally cutting themselves (Food Empowerment Project, 2015). The reason these children are paid so little to do these jobs is because the farmers can't afford to pay them more, because they have trouble just paying for normal things farmers should be able to, like fertilizer and replacing plants (Goodyear, 2013).

Chocolate is terrible for the environment of the Ivory Coast. Providing more than one-third of the world's cocoa supply comes with a cost. Over the timespan of 10 years, most of the forests at Côte d'Ivoire were cut down to make room for illegal cocoa farms. In fact, more than 74% of the forests thought to be protected have been taken over by illegal cocoa farmers. Five of the “protected” areas were found to have lost half of their primate species. 13 of the areas were completely devoid of any primates at all (Platt, 2015).

Although some may think that chocolate is good for Côte d'Ivoire because it supports a lot of the population, and that since a lot of it is sold, it makes them a lot of money. It is true that cocoa farming supports people, but only 3.5 out of the 22 million people living there. Only 8% of Côte d'Ivoire's GDP (gross domestic product) depends on cocoa beans (World Bank, 2014). Chocolate is extremely popular, and lots of it is sold (McCarthy, 2015), but if the country that provides the most cocoa out of any country in the world (Background Essay, 2016) is poor, then is it really worth it for them, despite all these negative aspects?

After reading this essay, it should be clear to you that even though the chocolate industry supports part of the population, right now, chocolate is not helping Côte d'Ivoire. The only way the chocolate industry could be good for Côte d'Ivoire would be if (as mentioned in Document F) chocolate companies helped insure farmers had decent incomes, and had the tools to make high quality products to supply chocolate companies with. That is not happening a lot right now, but if it starts being a bigger thing, then, and only then, would chocolate be good for Côte d'Ivoire. Right now, children work dangerous jobs with long hours and little pay, and forests are cut down, causing native primates to go extinct. The chocolate industry barely supports the Côte d'Ivoire.



**Feedback:**

- This is a persuasive essay (Document-Based Question) about how chocolate is not good for the Côte d'Ivoire.
- It hooks the reader by stating an interesting fact laying the groundwork for the rest of the essay.
- It keeps the reader interested and engaged.
- The style of writing is very unique, yet engaging.
- It analyzes certain documents to a great extent while also convincing the reader to agree with them.