1. as you reflect on first semester, and your writing from the summer essay to the *To Kill a Mockingbird* essay what do you notice is most different about your writing structure/format?

2. Where is one area you notice improvement in? Include evidence.

3. What elements about the writing format do you find makes writing easier? what components of the structure do you feel are challenge areas that you feel you need the most practice?

4. What overall goals do you have for your writing?

1. One major difference in my writing is the format, particularly in the conclusion. Since the summer, I have learned how to write more concisely and more effectively in this area. Before this semester, I wasn’t really ever taught where to go beyond the first sentence but now I have a more specific outline, which is very helpful. The structure of my body paragraphs has also improved. Before, I just did what they called at my old school a “quote sandwich,” which only required one quote and an explanation and produced cookie-cutter paragraphs. now I know that I need more than that, and I also know that I can manipulate the structure of the paragraph to the way I want it to be.

3. I’ve always thought of myself as sort of an oxymoron of a person- I contradict myself on many things. Thus, my passive-aggressive-ness leads me to answer both of these questions with the same element. An element that I enjoy and also find challenging is the way the format is very moldable. I like that I can put the sentences of a body paragraph out of order if I want to. At the same time, it felt nice to have the secure, plug-in-the-variables formula that I used to write essays with. I suppose I’m still adjusting to the new free-forming format, and as I am mostly opposed to change that I didn’t dictate myself, I miss the seat-belt outline. But I know it’s necessary if I want to become a better and more experienced writer.

4. The biggest goal I have for myself and my writing is to get away from using plot so much and to create stronger arguments. I feel as if my TK paper was all plot. I think I need further instruction on how to incorporate more “author’s craft” into my papers- I don’t feel I can concisely state all of it into one paragraph without relying on summarizing the story. I would like to work on all of those things, as well as increasing the confidence/stamina I have for writing and breaking out of the cookie-cutter structure I had in my old school.

2. I’m afraid I cannot properly answer this question because I do not really know where I have improved. I’ve never been the best judge of my own accomplishments. I mean, I know how to do more things like properly cite a quote and use transitions other than “however,” but could I quote myself doing these things? Not really. I know I keep referring to the format, but if you look at a body paragraph from my summer essay next to one from my TK paper, I may have more textual support in the latter but a better explanation in the former. Maybe it’s because I took more notes on The Pearl than TK, maybe it’s because The Pearl was simply a less challenging book. But just as you can’t base a conclusion of an experiment with just one trial, I don’t think I can quite answer this question with only two analytical essays.

However, the next danger associated with wealth that Steinbeck points out is the lack of caution that the small family pursued. It was the day they were selling the pearl, “...the morning of their lives, comparable only to the day when the baby had been born.... Juana, considering the matter, threw caution to the wind.” (Steinbeck, pg. 43, 44) Although in this instance, their incautious actions were merely consisted of the trivial matter of what clothes they were wearing, this was still a weighty statement on Steinbeck’s part. Caution seems to be the key thing that has kept them alive. This family’s entire subsistence was dependent on their prudence when it came to things like finances, food, resources, guarding against dangers like scorpions, even when Kino buried the pearl it was for the sake of caution. Furthermore, lack thereof often led to trouble for Kino and his small family. As regards to caution, Kino should also be more cautious as to the changes the pearl is creating in his personality.

In the eyes of the general public, Tom Robinson was far from innocent. “In the secret court of men’s hearts,” explains the protagonist, Scout, “Atticus had no case. Tom was a dead man the minute Mayella Ewell opened her mouth and screamed” (Lee 323). Nevertheless, Tom committed no crime, yet he was still deemed guilty by the jury and later shot 17 times. Referring to the publisher of the Maycomb Tribune, Scout notes “He likened Tom’s death to the senseless slaughter of songbirds by hunters and children” (Lee 323). Lee uses this to explain that it is not only unjust to harm something that has done no wrong, but also acutely unethical.