

A Separate Peace Final Exam

TOPIC CONSIDERATIONS 2018

NOTE: The topics below are catalysts for your essay, a persuasive paper. Assess them in this light. You will need to **revisit** the two documents on the APE website that address “**persuasive writing notes**” **These are important to do prior to outlining and preparing your paper.**

As is the case with all AP essays, a persuasive thesis, one that entails clearly an arguable statement, is preceded by an introductory paragraph that establishes a context, background, and basis for the paper; this is an expectation. As per the expectation, you are to include and cite text support for this essay.

Page references are for the Scribner paperback edition.

*** Challenge topics

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1. Two characters – Finny and Leper – appear at first to be radically different people. Yet, upon closer observation, one may see remarkably similar characters. Discuss these two ideas, focusing on **which of the two is more prevalent** – their differences or their similarities.

2. Write a persuasive essay in which you **address this question**: “Is Gene’s jouncing of the limb a rational or irrational act?”

3. Quackenbush, Brinker, and Leper are significant people in developing Gene Forrester’s character. Design an essay **that asserts** which of the three is most influential.

4. Gene has this thought in chapter 7 (Knowles 100): “To enlist...to slam the door impulsively on the past...to break the complex design I had been weaving since birth with all its dark threads, its unexplainable symbols set against a conventional background of domestic white and schoolboy blue...I yearned to take giant military shears to it...so only spools of khaki could weave only a plain, flat, khaki design, however twisted they might be.” (Knowles 100) This quote appears to be about conformity. Construct an essay that **supports, qualifies, or rebukes** Gene’s assertion about conformity.

5. Leper says, “War is like a test, isn’t it, and only the things and people that have been evolving the right way survive?” (Knowles 125) **Analyze and evaluate the validity of this statement** to Leper considering his experience at Devon School and in the Army.

6. **Support, defend or challenge as a theme** of *A Separate Peace*: “...wars are made instead by something ignorant in the human heart.” (Knowles 201)

7. A couple of Gene's final thoughts include his references to his 'enemy.' He says, "I never killed anybody and I never developed an intense level of hatred for the enemy. Because my war ended.....I killed my enemy there." (Knowles 204). He later continues, "All of them, all except Phineas, constructed at infinite cost to themselves these Maginot Lines against this enemy they thought they saw across the frontier, this enemy who never attacked that way—if he ever attacked at all; if he indeed was the enemy. (204). Design a persuasive paper in which you discuss who or what this enemy is and **why you think this way**.

8. It may appear at first glance that Finny is a stronger character and that Gene is a weaker character; yet, Finny dies in the end. In your essay, **examine** each character's strengths and weaknesses, and then **argue** who you think is the weaker character in the novel.

9. Discuss the significance of the novel's title A Separate Peace and **articulate convincingly** why you think the author, John Knowles, entitles the novel this way.