Summerville Union High School

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**Ms. Diehl**

“There are no great limits to growth because there are no limits of

human intelligence, imagination, and wonder.”

*-Ronald Reagan*

**Assignment: Final in-class Essay Exam: *A Separate Peace***

Please review all of the prompts below carefully and choose which prompt you would like to respond to for the In-Class Final Essay Exam. After you choose a prompt, reread the prompt and begin to synthesize your ideas into a single thesis statement that will answer your chosen prompt. Next, you will outline your ideas for the essay: Hook, Context, Thesis Statement, Topic Sentences, Evidence, Analysis, and Concluding Ideas.

**Day of Final Essay: Monday, March 28th** – You may only use one 3x5 (one sided, hand-written) card on your in-class Essay. You will need to condense your information from your outline in order to be best prepared for your essay. At the top of your essay, please indicate which number (1-10) prompt you are responding to.

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| Prompt #1  *Character Analysis* | Throughout the novel, Finny seems to force himself to remain in the innocent moment, denying both his accident and the war until Brinker and the trial force him to come face to face with his injury and Gene’s role in it. Ironically, it is this knowledge that ultimately destroys him. What comment is Knowles making about people such as Finny in the novel? Is it possible to stay youthful and free or is that simply an irresponsible notion? Was it Finny’s naivety that destroyed him or Gene’s jealously? Why can’t they remain forever young? Is it dangerous? |
| Prompt #2  *Symbolic References* | Based off our conversations, we have recognized there is quite a bit of symbolism Knowles included in his novel, *A Separate Peace.* There are symbolic references relating to the characters names, relating to the war, Biblical references, and evolutionary references. Hone in on one symbol and explore the significance of the symbolism in relation to the themes in the novel. If you choose this option, please address the **significance and statement** Knowles is making through the use of symbolism—and not that it is simply present. |
| Prompt #3  *Character Analysis* | Gene is associated with bitterness, rivalry, complicacy, and competence. In contrast, Finny is associated with strength, power, goodness, and excellence. Yet, it is Finny who dies and Gene who lives. Considering both characters, focus on the strengths and weaknesses of both characters, arguing who is the weaker character. Consider the statement Knowles is making about strength and survival through these young men. What does it take to survive in a modern world? |
| Prompt #4  *Response to Literature* | Finny’s charisma, enthusiasm, and confidence make him a natural leader among the Upper-Middlers. In contrast, Gene is passive and indifferent, yielding to Finny’s impulses and demands. What argument is the novel making about assuming the role of leader or follower? Does the novel assert one role’s superiority over the other? |
| Prompt #5  *Thematic Idea Analysis* | Unlike the majority of the students at Devon, Finny embodies the spirit of the individuality; a “model boy who was most comfortable in the truant’s corner.” Is the novel in support of conformity or rebellion, or neither? What are the limits or consequences to either one, if any? |
| Prompt #6  *Character Analysis* | *A Separate Peace* focuses on the relationship between Finny and Gene. The story reveals outward expressions and undercurrents of this relationship. The boys are different in so many ways (rules, spontaneity, sports, academics, beliefs, jealousy, backgrounds), and yet they are drawn together by a special bond. After reading the novel, would you classify the relationship between Finny and Gene as *friendship*? Support your reasoning with specific examples from the story as you create your definition of friendship. |
| Prompt #7  *Symbolic References* | At the end of *A Separate Peace*, Gene says, “…my war ended before I even put on a uniform; I was on active duty all my time at school; I killed my enemy there” (Knowles 204). There are many different possible interpretations as to exactly what enemy Gene kills. What enemy do you think Gene is referring to while attending Devon? Be sure to support your thesis with specific examples from the text. |
| Prompt #8  *Thematic Idea Analysis* | All of the themes and symbols in the novel involve opposites or “counterpoints.” Some examples include Gene and Finny, war and peace, the two rivers at Devon, innocence and guilt, conformity and rebellion, and reality and perception, etc. Use these counterpoints to prove how opposites attract and compliment each other and how all of the opposites in the novel “come together” and blend into one (i.e. they become each other). |
| Prompt #9  *Character Analysis* | “The idea of his face on a woman’s body. That’s what made me psycho” (Knowles 149). In the novel *A Separate Peace*, the war seems almost fictional to the boys at Devon. When they find out that Leper loses his mind due to the war, a new sense of reality descends upon the boys. Provide evidence to show how Leper’s enlisting brought the reality of war home to the boys at Devon and how it affected them. Who do you think it affected the most and why? |
| Prompt #10  *Create Your Own* | Create your own prompt. Please submit a well-drafted prompt to Ms. Diehl for approval. Happy writing ☺ |

**Please include:**

* At least **one** quote or paraphrase (with a correctly formatted citation) from ASP **per paragraph**
* Avoid all **contractions** and **personal pronouns**
* At least **three sentences of commentary per concrete detail** to illustrate your own analysis of the subject and prove that you have thoroughly researched and understand the topic/examples you are discussing (refer to sentence frames for solid analysis)
* MLA format required