



The 'Lit' Theatre Project 2023

Palm Beach Dramaworks

Underwritten by Kids' Dreams

2023 Timeline

- August – Students read *Lobby Hero* by Kenneth Lonergan (provided)
- Sept. 11-13 – PBD visits participating classrooms to discuss and analyze the play with students. A prompt for an essay contest is announced.
- Sept. 22 – Essays due to Palm Beach Dramaworks
- Oct. 17 – 10:00am performance and talkback of *Lobby Hero* at PBD. Essay contest winners announced.

Project Details

- Students must be in grades 9 – 12.
- All district Title 1 high school students are eligible.
- There is no cost to schools or students.
- Coach transportation and theatre tickets are provided.
- All essays are adjudicated blindly.

Standards

By participating in the 'Lit' Theatre Project, the following standards are addressed:

- ELA.9-12.C.1.3: Write literary analyses to support claims, using logical reasoning, credible evidence from sources, and elaboration, demonstrating an understanding of literary elements.
- ELA.9-12.R.1.2: Analyze and compare universal themes and their development throughout a literary text. Benchmark Clarifications: Clarification 1: A universal theme is an idea that applies to anyone, anywhere, regardless of cultural differences. Examples include but are not limited to an individual's or a community's confrontation with nature; an individual's struggle toward understanding, awareness, and/or spiritual enlightenment; the tension between the ideal and the real; the conflict between human beings and advancements in technology/science; the impact of the past on the present; the inevitability of fate; the struggle for equality; and the loss of innocence.
- ELA.9-12.C.3.1: Follow the rules of standard English grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling appropriate to grade level.
- TH.912.C.1.6: Respond to theatrical works by identifying and interpreting influences of historical, social, or cultural contexts.

***Lobby Hero* by Kenneth Lonergan**

The play focuses on responsible decision-making, ethics and corruption, and social or economic bias.

Jeff, a young security guard in a Manhattan apartment building, is caught in a difficult situation after his supervisor, William, reveals to him that his brother was arrested for the brutal murder of a nurse. William tells Jeff that he's decided to provide an alibi for his brother in order to save him from prosecution. After William asks Jeff not to mention it to anyone, Jeff is torn between his loyalty to William and his conscience.

Meanwhile, Jeff is attracted to the new rookie police officer on the building's beat, Dawn, whose partner, Bill, daily visits a woman in the building. Jeff asks Dawn for a date, but she refuses. Quietly, Bill pulls William aside and assures him he'll give detectives investigating the murder William's brother's alibi, and vouch for William's integrity. William shares those details with Jeff, again asking that he not mention it. When Jeff reveals to Dawn that William may not be telling the truth, implicating both William and Bill, Dawn decides to exact revenge on Bill for his unseemly behavior toward her. All four characters find themselves entangled in a complex web of lies, secrets, and conflicting loyalties. The play raises questions about ethical decisions and the difficulty in doing the right thing in a world where the lines between right and wrong are often blurred.

The Prompt

After reading the play and analyzing the character and their conflicts, students will write an essay based on the prompt:

- **Is there a moral obligation to always be honest?**
- The essay should be between 300 and 1000 words.

Submission Information

Please note that all essays must be submitted by a teacher or school administrator. We do not accept submissions from individual students.

- Plays can be submitted as Word or PDF documents.
- Submit all entries in a folder via Google or Dropbox: Please scan, upload or organize your students' play, and send a Google or Dropbox link to: gcadwallader@palmbeachdramaworks.org
- Submit through email: Please attach essays to an email and send to: gcadwallader@palmbeachdramaworks.org
- Please be sure all essays have a title page with the following: Student name, teacher name, school.
- **Please do not include the student's name, teacher's name or school on the essay pages. Adjudicators will read the essays blindly.**
- All entries will receive a confirmation email after submission.

Ethics Essay Introduction

"An ethics essay uses moral theories to build arguments on an issue. You describe a controversial problem and examine it to determine how it affects individuals or society. Ethics papers analyze arguments on both sides of a possible dilemma, focusing on right and wrong. The analysis gained can be used to solve real-life cases. Before embarking on writing an ethical essay, keep in mind that most individuals follow moral principles." Daniel Howard

An ethics essay has a basic structure: introduction-body-conclusion. In each section writers apply specific formatting elements, such as a thesis statement in the introduction, topic sentences in body paragraphs, and a thesis restatement in the conclusion.

How Does an Ethics Paper Differ from Other Essays?

For an ethics essay, characteristics include addressing an ethical issue, using an ethical lens to make arguments regarding a controversial matter, or explaining an ethical dilemma. Ideally, the

essay focuses on elaborating on ethics and morality. In contrast, a narrative essay focuses on telling the writer's story, while an informative essay focuses on educating the audience concerning a topic. An ethics essay should be written in third-person language.

Outline and Structure of an Ethics Essay

Like any essay, an ethics essay follows a structure that underscores its outline. Basically, this structure comprises three sections: introduction, body, and conclusion. When writing an essay, writers should confirm that the introduction and conclusion are each 10 percent of the total word count, while the body of at least three paragraphs, is 80 percent.

The essay outline is as follows:

- I. Introduction
 - a. Hook sentence.
 - b. Background information on an ethical dilemma.
 - c. Writer's claim – a thesis statement.
- II. Body Paragraphs
 - a. Argument
 - i. state a position of an argument.
 - ii. support this position with evidence.
 - iii. explain how this evidence supports this argument and evidence.
 - iv. conclude why this argument is valid.
 - b. Counterargument
 - i. provide a counterargument to your position in the first body paragraph.
 - ii. include evidence that supports this counterargument, being opposite to the argument in the first body paragraph.
 - iii. explain how the counterargument and evidence in this paragraph are correct by using an opposite perspective.
 - iv. finish by stating why this counterargument is valid for this case.
 - c. Rebuttal
 - i. define the weaknesses of the counterargument.
 - ii. cover credible evidence that supports such weaknesses.
 - iii. write how these weaknesses make a counterargument irrelevant.
 - iv. end with a statement that explains why a counterargument is not valid compared to an argument.
- III. Conclusion
 - a. Restate the thesis.
 - b. Sum up the argument, counterargument, and rebuttal.
 - c. State a final claim.

Example of an Ethics Paper Topic
Arguing for a single view on a topic
Adapted from *Wr1ter.com*

Euthanasia: Is It Ethical?

Terminal illness is a condition of profound pain and suffering for those affected, including the patients and their families. Today, some scientists support euthanasia, the aspect of assisting terminally ill patients in ending their lives. While health professionals should do everything to help their patients avoid suffering, assisting them in ending their lives is unethical and immoral.

Life is a sacred thing, and no human being has any justification for ending it, regardless of whose it is. For example, the premise of a debate about euthanasia, which refers to assisted suicide, is the prevalence of terminal illnesses that subject individuals to a life of pain, suffering, and dependence. Without any hope of recovery, some individuals have opted to end their lives with the help of their loved ones or health professionals. While there is every reason to empathize with these individuals' fate, there is no basis for supporting their desire to end their lives. In turn, the sanctity of life does not allow human beings to end life, no matter the circumstances.

If there seems to be no hope of recovery, ending life is counterproductive in an age of significant scientific and technological advancements. Basically, scientists are working around the clock to find cures for incurable diseases that have proven to be a threat to humanity. For example, today, smallpox is no longer a threat because a cure is found (Persson, 2010). Therefore, the fact that there may be no cure for a disease today does not mean that there will not be a cure tomorrow. Naturally, human beings rely on hope to overcome moments of darkness, such as a terminal illness diagnosis. Nonetheless, it is the effort of the scientific community that has always brought hope to humanity. In this light, there is no ethical or moral justification for euthanasia.

Euthanasia is not only a solution to terminal illness but also a sign of hopelessness and despair. When patients take the root of assisted suicide, it means that they give up on looking for alternatives in dealing with a problem. In this case, the fact that a terminal illness does not have a cure does not imply that it cannot be managed. Moreover, individuals who love a terminally ill person, such as family members and friends, hope to spend more time with them before an inevitable time happens. As such, terminally ill patients should use their families and health professionals to live longer. In essence, this aspect reflects true humanity – standing firm and determining amid insurmountable odds. On that truth alone, euthanasia is an idea that deserves no thought or attention.

There is nothing more devastating than a terminal illness diagnosis. Basically, such news punctures the hope of many individuals, families, and communities. Nonetheless, patients should not lose hope and despair to the point of wanting to end their lives because of being diagnosed with a terminal illness. Because life is sacred and there is always a higher probability of medical breakthroughs in an age of scientific and technological advancement, euthanasia is an unethical and immoral solution to a terminal illness.

Reference: Persson, S. 2010. "Smallpox, syphilis, and salvation: Medical breakthroughs that changed the world."