



# BEACON POINT

— *writing your future* —

The hook is in blue, the background information is in black, and the thesis is in red.

## EXAMPLE FROM LITERARY ANALYSIS PAPER

“Where have all the good men gone?” sings Bonnie Tyler in “I’m Holding out for a Hero.” A question proclaimed in the ‘80’s— through music, newspaper articles, and television news— increasingly and with great alarm becomes more essential. Where are all the good men? In order to seek a good man, one must understand what makes a man good, which Flannery O’Connor explores in her short story “A Good Man is Hard to Find,” asserting that perfect, holistic goodness is unobtainable. Knowing this, a saving grace comes and picks up the slack; yet, believing in such an absolute saving grace is both pernicious and convenient. Unaware of the pernicious nature of such a pious dogmatic principle, men cleave to that righteous air of a saving grace. “Jesus save me,” men cry, despite doing nothing to save themselves. O’Connor illustrates the duality of goodness and the hypocrisy in the saving grace through the use of characterization and plot development.

## EXAMPLES FROM ARGUMENTATIVE PAPERS

“Mom, I need a cell phone. Mom, please get me a cell phone—all my friends have one. I will be a responsible please.... Ugh you are ruining my life,” whine the teenagers across the country who do not have a cell phone. But do they really need one? The first cell phone was created in 1973, but they were not commercially available until 1983. The first text message was sent in 1989, but cell phones did not really take off until 2000. Therefore, teenagers survived years without cell phones even when they existed. Young teenagers should not have cell phones because they do not need them, it distracts them from what is important, and they learn poor communication skills.

This next one may not seem like an argumentative essay, but it is as I am arguing for ethical practices in literature.

Silence doesn’t help the cause. Speak out. Speak, a tough, tender, and darkly funny story of a teenage outcast by Laurie Halse Anderson, delves into many sensitive topics with a fresh moral approach. Anderson adequately captures many horrors of life; speaking out in truth of these dangers, while simultaneously speaking for morals, Anderson’s book is a cry for higher standards—morally, aesthetically, and truthfully. Captivating a wide range of audiences, Speak received outstanding reviews, the Printz award for excellence in young adult literature, and a noted finalist for the National Book Award and the Edgar Allan Poe Award. A top rate



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book. Excellence ensues from each gripping page revealing the story of Melinda Sordina, who finds herself ostracized from all of her friends. Attempting to find solace, she hides out alone—inside her own head. But that isn't safe. Because there's something she's trying hard not to think about, something that if she let in, would blow her carefully constructed disguise to smithereens. And then she would have to speak the truth. While Melinda discovers how to deal with pain and how to speak out, readers will discover the danger of silence and find their own reasons to speak out. **Laurie Halse Anderson successfully deals with a sensitive realistic topic in a moral way. Let this book serve as a guide; let this book pave the way to higher standards.**

## EXAMPLE FROM AN INFORMATIONAL ESSAY

One of the most controversial literary debates surrounds the idea of ethical criticism. Should ethical criticism exist; what merit does it contain; what concreteness enshrouds the ideal, or is it abstract? Should we evaluate stories from such a viewpoint, or is it ridiculous to suppose a story to have that much effect on an individual to even need such a critical standpoint? Wayne Booth, one of the foremost ethical critics, declares, "Not even the most ardent opponents of censorship or ethical criticism can deny that many stories can actually harm at least some who take them in" (25). From this we ascertain a story has influence over us; thus, we need ethical criticism. With that in mind is ethical criticism purely subjective and enigmatic? Previously, I could emphatically state the objective nature of ethical criticism. However, a look at the following statement by Georgia Newman, professor of composition and literature, causes the clarity to dim to a degree: "As an English Major, the lens through which I viewed and evaluated "good literature" was considerably broader than the moral lens through which I saw and evaluated personal behavior" (331). If one were to take an ardent stance against such a quote and believe, as I do, that we shouldn't have two lenses, but rather merge them into one—the personal viewpoint—then the objectivity becomes questionable, giving rise to subjective critical theories. Conclusively, ethical criticism contains some objectivity, but subjective ideas will certainly arise.

With that being said, I evaluate literature from a personal standpoint: what I will not allow in my personal life I will not allow in my literary choices. **In an effort to ground my ethical criticism—so as to not make it too abstract and simplistic as to say whatever does not offend or grate my personal standards—I have created five criteria for ethical consideration: (1) contains a message intended to enrich societal values and life, (2) presents all actions with subsequent consequences, (3) demonstrates role-models or examples readers can follow and learn from, (4) advocates the beauty and wonder of life, and (5) portrays each individual passage as distinct and valuable parts of the whole.**



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## EXAMPLE FROM A FICTIONAL MAGAZINE ARTICLE (yes, it was fun to pretend I was a famous actress)

“No, thank you; I have no desire to ruin my life,” Mel Chinney, Katie Madsen’s character in [Chain of Life](#), confidently declared when offered alcohol and drugs. How often do Hollywood stars stand in front of the camera and make moral stands found in their script, and then two days later appear as the feature story outlining their drunken rage, scandalous affair, or spousal abuse? However, the latest buzz confirms Katie Madsen to be as moral, if not more so, than her likeable character, Mel Chinney. [Catching up with Katie at the Olive Garden, I discovered first-hand Katie is well on her way to becoming a moral rock in Hollywood.](#)

## EXAMPLE FROM A 3 PARAGRAPH RESTAURANT REVIEW

During my fiber-grazed days, I would frequently hit up the Pita Jungle for some hummus. In fact, it even became my road-trip food. I would balance the hummus on the passenger seat while I liberally dipped my pita, hoping not to spill. This quickly became my favorite hang-out spot, and I would schedule several friendly gatherings at the Pita Jungle. [With a nice ambiance and quality ethnic, healthy food, the Pita Jungle leaves customers with a full, yet flat stomach.](#)