**Intros: Vague to specific – Introduce your theme and the text**

Maycomb, Alabama. Where miles of cotton billow in the wind, where the smell of musty red dirt roads fill the air, and where “You are My Sunshine” plays quietly on the radio in town hall. What a quaint, nice town, right? Wrong. This is a town overrun with discrimination and prejudice against anyone who does not follow the strict unspoken “social codes “that were typical of the Jim Crow South of the 1930’s. This fictional Alabama town is the setting for Harper Lee’s novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and although it is a fictional place, it accurately captures the social and cultural context of the South in the 1930’s. In her novel, the reader witnesses various characters grapple with the codes of their society. The largest story line, the Tom Robinson trial, serves as a perfect opportunity to explore how social codes impact society. **When the main character, Atticus, implores the jury to break these codes and provide Tom Robinson with justice, Lee conveys that fear can motivate one to conform to society’s expectations.**

Body Paragraphs: **TOPIC SENTENCES must be a more specific variant of your thesis!**

In his closing argument, Atticus’s ability to point out Maycomb’s cruelty and injustice despite fearing the repercussions, demonstrates that courage is necessary to defy social codes.

**Add context and embed quote (example in yellow)**

By agreeing to defend Tom in this trial, he is choosing almost certain defeat. It’s a black man’s word against a white man’s, but he takes the case as a matter of principle because he understands that “Just because we were licked a hundred years before we started doesn’t mean we shouldn’t try” (89). Due to the deeply embedded social norms of his society, Atticus understands he will not win, yet he has the courage to give Tom his best effort because it is what Tom deserves. Through his willingness to defend Tom, Lee uses Atticus’ character to demonstrate the ability to preserve despite the risk of failure, and makes him an example of true courage for his children and the town of Maycomb. (Note the **concluding sentence** connecting back to the theme)

**Quality transition:**

**Unlike Atticus,** the trial scene reveals that the cultural setting of Maycomb will prevent the jury from heeding Atticus’s message and bringing justice to Tom.

**Basics:**

Check SPELLING

Italicize the title

MLA Formatting: 12 point Times New Roman, double spaced, heading and TITLE for your essay

PAGE NUMBERS!