

Many times when I introduce myself to someone as an English teacher, I note what I consider a somewhat amusing response. Automatically people try to speak properly; they apologize for grammatical errors; they cease to act naturally. Little do they know, I could care less how a person speaks as long as he communicates effectively. I am not sitting in judgment over them and their petty verbal errors. The assumption these people make is that all English teachers are alike: that we all are obsessed with grammatical correctness and that we all look down on those who have not mastered the intricacies of the language. In other words, I have oftentimes been stereotyped based on my profession. Stereotyping is a crucial idea addressed in Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. In the novel Lee describes the life of a small Southern town, Maycomb, and she shows how the many events that take place in that town impact the lives of two children, Jem and Scout, and their father, Atticus. Throughout the novel the kids learn of the many forms of injustice that exist in the world, including stereotyping. Through the experiences of the Finch family, Harper Lee shows not just the various forms which stereotyping takes, but also the destructive power of it.

CONCLUSION

- Summarize key points

- Restate thesis in different way

--Restate TS's in a different, concise way

--Broaden out: say something **new** and **pertinent**, that reaches **beyond the scope of the essay**.

Labeling individuals and judging them based on those labels can be a very destructive occurrence. Some people are stereotyped based on their race; others are pigeon-holed based on family affiliation; still others are limited by gender role labels; and some have the misfortune of being stereotyped by lifestyle. However, the damage that is done is similar regardless of the kind of stereotyping: an individual ceases to be an individual and instead becomes a hollow shell, a puppet, a robot controlled by external, shallow, and ultimately insignificant personal traits. People were created to be individual. No person's DNA is exactly the same as another's. This means that no one person can do exactly what another person can do. Each and every person is, in fact, indispensable as a result. Each person possesses a skill set which will allow him/her to do things no one else can replicate. Imagine how many people have been denied the opportunity to express themselves freely, the opportunity to become their unique self, and thereby contribute something absolutely unique to the world. Perhaps that person, if allowed to develop free from the pressures of conformity, could be the person who creates the next great piece of literature, or design the first car that runs on cold

fusion, or be the first leader known to humankind who could unite the world in such a way that war becomes a thing of the past. But tragically, since no one else ever created will ever possess that unique combination of traits, that great boon to humanity might be lost forever. How much better off all people will be if the drive to stereotype can one day be destroyed.