

Position 5 (Set 1)

Analysis: Lit - Watsons Go to Birmingham

Position: Thesis

This paper scores a 5 for the thesis. While the simplicity of the prompt lends itself to this level of success, this thesis, “Throughout the story, Christopher Paul Curtis first portrays Byron as a selfish and cruel character, but by the end, Byron changes into a more mature 13 year old,” is defensible, comprehensive of the entire book, and focused on how Byron changes. The lack of analysis keeps this thesis at a 5 versus a 6.

Position: Assertion

This paper scores a 5 for the assertions. All of the topic sentences are directly relevant to the thesis, even though the second body paragraph starts with a topic sentence versus an assertion: “As the Watsons continue their trip to Birmingham, Alabama, Byron starts to show another side of his personality.” This is not an assertion because it is not really defensible. There is no claim about what causes this change or how he changes. With two out of the three topic sentences being assertions, this qualifies as most of the topic sentences being with assertions. Additionally, because they are arranged chronologically, there is an attempted sequence of assertions.

Essay: Lit - Watsons Go to Birmingham

Prompt: Describe how Bryon’s personality changes throughout the novel.

Byron Watson is a very cruel, selfish, troublesome character in the book, “The Watsons Go to Birmingham-1963” by Christopher Paul Curtis. When the Watsons travel to Birmingham, Alabama to drop him off to their Grandma Sands to set Byron straight, Byron is changed forever. Throughout the story, Christopher Paul Curtis first portrays Byron as a selfish and cruel character, but by the end, Byron changes into a more mature 13 year old.

In the beginning of the novel, Byron is cruel. Byron hurts other things and people and thinks it is funny. For example, Byron hurts Larry Dunn because he stole Kenny’s gloves and kind of laughs about. This shows that Byron is cruel because he beats up Larry Dunn for something kind of petty like stealing his brother’s gloves. Also Byron walks in circles because he knows Kenny is trying to talk to him sideways. This shows that

Byron is cruel because he is trying to make Kenny dizzy. In addition to this, Byron punches Kenny in the arm when Kenny didn't do anything at all. This shows Byron is cruel because he punches Kenny for no apparent reason. Furthermore, Byron calls Kenny names like Pointdexter. This shows that Byron is cruel because he calls Kenny names. To add on, Byron also throws a cookie at a bird and kills it. This shows that Byron is cruel because Byron is showing animal cruelty.

As the Watsons continue their trip to Birmingham, Alabama, Byron starts to show another side of his personality. There are several moments when the Watsons are in Birmingham that Byron acts out of character. For example, Byron acts out of character, by laughing and talking with Mr. Roberts and his dad and is even interested in Mr. Robert's story. In the past, Byron would never be interested in what adults had to say, but now he is. Also, when Grandma Sands tells them about the dangers of Collier's Landing, Byron listens to directions and doesn't go there. This shows that Byron is acting out of character because he is not being defiant and is following directions. Furthermore, Byron even saves his brother when he is trapped in the whirlpool. Before Byron didn't even care about his brother. When Byron saves his brother he even hugs Kenny and kept on crying and saying, "Kenny, Kenny, Kenny" (179). This shows Byron has really changed ever since they got to Birmingham.

At the end of the novel, Byron is kind. Byron is being kind to Kenny. For example, Byron is doing things for Kenny like pour out his cereal and milk. This shows that Byron is kind because he is doing things for his brother. Also, Byron asks Kenny to watch TV with him. In addition to this, Byron lets Kenny play basketball with him. This shows Byron is being kind because before he would never let Kenny play basketball with him.

The character Byron changes significantly in the novel, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham- 1963*. Christopher Paul Curtis first describes Byron as a cruel and selfish character. However, when the Watsons go on a real trip to visit Grandma Sands, Byron goes through a lot like the bombing. So, at the end of the book, Byron has become a more mature 13 year old.