

Uncle Tom's Cabin

Sample Analytical Paper Topics

TOPIC #1

In Uncle Tom's Cabin, Harriet Beecher Stowe emphasizes that the effects of slavery are as tragic for the slave as for the slave holder. Discuss why Mr. Shelby and Augustine St. Clare are ambivalent figures because of their involvement in slavery.

Outline

- I. **Thesis Statement:** *Mr. Shelby and Augustine St. Clare are ambivalent figures because despite being humane slave owners, they unwittingly contribute to their slaves' miseries.*
- II. **The slave owners' humanity**
 - A. Both treat their slaves humanely
 - B. Mr. Shelby repulsed by Haley the slave trader
 - C. St. Clare knows slavery is wrong
 - D. St. Clare exposes Miss Ophelia's hypocritical stance on slavery
- III. **The slave owners' carelessness**
 - A. Mr. Shelby falls into debt and must sell Tom and Harry
 - B. Mr. Shelby refuses help from his wife
 - C. St. Clare opposes slavery, but cannot free his slaves
 - D. St. Clare stalls at writing Tom's free papers and dies
- IV. **Their unintentional effects on Uncle Tom**
 - A. Mr. Shelby separates Tom from his family
 - B. St. Clare dies and Simon Legree buys Tom

TOPIC #2

Uncle Tom and Eva St. Clare can be considered as saintly martyrs. Explain how each fits this description with regard to slavery and religion, referring to examples from the book.

Outline

- I. **Thesis Statement:** *Uncle Tom and Eva St. Clare are saintly martyrs because both share the qualities of Christ-like piety: sacrificing their lives to help others, being generous, humble, and forgiving.*
- II. **Uncle Tom**
 - A. Understanding and forgiving of Mr. Shelby for selling him
 - B. Calms anger of Aunt Chloe and Master George
 - C. Helps other laborers on the Legree plantation

- D. Stops Cassy from killing Legree
- E. Pities Legree while suffering beatings and death

III. Little Eva

- A. Wants to buy Tom to make him happy
- B. Befriends and loves Topsy when no one else does
- C. Convinces Henrique St. Clare to love Dodo
- D. Indirectly influences Miss Ophelia to love Topsy
- E. Tries to convert her father, Augustine St. Clare
- F. On her deathbed, tells servants to live and love as Christians

TOPIC #3

Throughout the book, the author emphasizes the importance of family to argue against the evils of slavery. By providing examples of families in the novel, show how Harriet Beecher Stowe connects this theme of family to counter slavery.

Outline

- I. **Thesis Statement:** *Harriet Beecher Stowe argues against slavery by depicting slaves as having families. The author thus personalizes the problem and gains the readers' sympathy through their own familial experiences.*
- II. **Uncle Tom's family**
 - A. Tom as a family man
 - B. Portrayal of Aunt Chloe and their children
- III. **The Harris family**
 - A. Eliza runs away with Harry to protect her only son
 - B. George Harris runs away
 - 1. promises to buy his wife and child
- IV. **The Shelby family**
 - A. Mrs. Shelby
 - 1. teaches religion to slaves
 - 2. raises Eliza almost like a daughter
 - 3. opposes breaking families through sales of Tom and Harry
- V. **The Bird family**
 - A. Mrs. Bird
 - 1. argues religious morality with husband, Senator Bird
 - 2. thinks of own departed son when helping Eliza