

# Novel and separate peace chapters essay sample

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



“ The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?” Jeremiah 17: 9

A Separate Peace Chapters 1-5 Name \_\_\_\_\_

Personal Response

If you could talk to Gene, what would you say to him?

Analyzing Literature-Recall and Interpret

1. At what time of year does Gene return to Devon to visit? What atmosphere, or mood, is created by setting the story during this season? What do Gene’s descriptions of the season suggest about his state of mind?
2. Describe Finny’s relationship with his teachers. What does the teachers’ attitude toward Finny suggest about his personality?
3. Gene believes blitzball is a perfect game for Finny. Explain how the game is played. How do the rules of the game and the skills needed to play it reflect Finny’s character?
4. Describe the awards Finny has won. What record does he break? What do the awards and his refusal to make his accomplishment public suggest about him?
5. After the overnight trip to the beach, what does Gene decide Finny is trying to do to him? What leads Gene to this conclusion? How does Gene feel when he realizes he is wrong?

Evaluate and Connect

6. Evaluate Finny's response to his injury and Gene's revelation. Is the response believable? Is it consistent with Finny's previous attitudes and behavior? Support your opinions with evidence from the novel.

7. How might competitiveness have affected the friendship between Gene and Finny? How might Gene answer that question? How might Finny answer it?

### Literature and Writing—A Complicated Friendship

Write an analysis of Gene and Finny's friendship as it was before Finny's fall. What conflicting feelings does Gene have about Finny? Which person in the friendship, in your opinion, is more emotionally mature? Support your ideas with details from the text.

### Extending Your Response

Was jouncing the limb a planned, conscious decision on Gene's part or an impulsive act? Examine the dialogue and the events that occur just before and after the fall. After examining this information, debate Finny's accident. Why might Gene have wanted to see Finny fall? How does Gene feel immediately afterward, and why might he feel this way? Why does Gene later wear Finny's clothing? Use details from the novel to support your conclusions.

### A Separate Peace Chapters 6-10

### Personal Response

How did Gene deal with his friendship with Finny after the accident? Would you have done anything differently? Why or why not?

### Analyzing Literature–Recall and Interpret

1. What does Gene do when Quackenbush accuses him of being maimed? What motivates Gene to respond this way? In what sense might Gene be maimed?
2. Contrast the mood at Devon during the summer session and fall session. Identify at least three factors that might account for this change in mood.
3. What is Finny's theory about the war? How might his injury influence his feelings toward the war?
4. Why is it surprising that Elwin (Leper) Lepellier is the first Devon boy to enlist? In what ways is he different from the other boys who talk of enlisting?

### Evaluate and Connect

5. In this section, what details does the author use to show the ways in which war is changing the atmosphere at Devon?
6. In your opinion, do most of the students have a clear idea about what life as a soldier will be like? Explain.

### Literature and Writing–Analyzing Character

In his note to Gene, Leper pleads, “ I have escaped and need help. . . .” Why is Gene, who is on the brink of adulthood, unable and unwilling to feel sorry for Leper? What might Gene not wish to hear? In a paragraph, evaluate Gene’s response to Leper’s breakdown, and explain what the response suggests about Gene. Be sure to support your opinions with examples from the text.

### Extending Your Response

Finny organizes his own version of the Olympic games as part of his Devon Winter Carnival. After finishing a decathlon, Gene says, “ It wasn’t the cider which made me surpass myself, it was this liberation we had torn from the gray encroachments of 1943, the escape we had concocted, this afternoon of momentary, illusory, special and separate peace.” In your group discuss what Gene means in this passage. What is the “ separate peace” that Gene is describing, and how do the students achieve it on this day? At this point, what does the phrase “ a separate peace” mean to you and to the novel?

What does it mean to be at peace with yourself? What kinds of things interfere with peace of mind? Jot down your definition of what it means to be at peace. Then list obstacles that often stand in the way of peace of mind.

### A Separate Peace Chapters 11-13

As the novel moves toward its climax, several aspects of the story come together: Gene’s feelings of responsibility, Brinker’s role as a leader, Leper’s fragile mental state, disregard for rules in pursuit of fun, and Finny’s trusting nature. As you read, make note of how each of these elements plays a role in

the outcome of the final section. In the spaces below, take notes on what happens to Finny and why it happens.

### Personal Response

How did you feel about what happened to Finny? Describe the emotions you experienced as you read.

### Analyzing Literature

#### Recall and Interpret

1. How does Brinker get Gene and Finny to attend the mock trial? In your opinion, why is Brinker so determined to investigate the incident?
2. What is Leper's description of the accident? Why is his testimony so upsetting to Finny?
3. What does Gene mean when he says, " Phineas, you wouldn't be any good in the war, even if nothing had happened to your leg." What qualities make Finny a poor candidate for military service?

#### Evaluate and Connect

4. Do you think Brinker's mock trial was a good idea? Why or why not?
5. What understanding do Finny and Gene reach about the incident in the tree? Does their explanation of what happened satisfy you? Why or why not?
6. Do you blame Gene for Finny's death? Why or why not?

### Literature and Writing

#### Character Analysis

On a separate sheet of paper, write a character analysis that explores how Gene grows and changes during the course of the novel. Do you believe that Gene has found peace with himself at the end of the novel? Why or why not? Support your opinions with quotations and other evidence from the novel.

With a small group of classmates, review the opening scene of the novel, in which Gene, now an adult, visits Devon. What places does he most want to see again? Why? After reading the novel, what do you think the real purpose of the visit is? Does Gene's visit support the idea that he has found inner peace or contradict it? Write your response on a separate sheet of paper.