

Saul the Misunderstood

The Bible is full of many characters and stories. Some of these stories and characters are known to one and all such as Adam and Eve, Noah, Jesus, etc., but others are less common but no less important such as Luke, Mark, Peter, Samuel, or Saul. **Saul may be one of the most important characters in the Bible because he is chosen by God to rule, but in the end fails to live up to the title and ends in disappointment.** He is later haunted by God and envious of David and ultimately spins out of control until he and his sons commit suicide. **Saul is one of the most dynamic characters in the Bible for his changes and his roles in influencing Samuel and David.**

At first, Saul is a reluctant hero of sorts. God told Samuel that he will find the King of Israel by visiting every city. Finally, Samuel came upon Saul who was described as “a choice young man, and a goodly: and *there was* not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward *he was* higher than any of the people” (1 Samuel 9:2). This talks not only of his bearing, but of his nature as well. He was the goodliest of all Israelites. He is already being set up to become the protagonist and he is the chosen of God and is an imposing figure among his people; however, we get a glimpse at the future of Saul when he is announced by Samuel.

And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken.

When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken: and when they sought him, he could not be found. Therefore they inquired of the LORD further, if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff. And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward. (1 Samuel 10:20-23)

He was not immediately to be found because he hid from his God appointed duties. Saul goes on to prove himself in battle against the Ammonites winning the support of his people and showing that he was the great king that God foretold Samuel of. **Up to this point, Saul is a very static character and matches many other characters of the Bible as godly inspired heroes, but it is after his war against the Philistines where his**

son Jonathan proves himself that Saul begins to turn into a dynamic character not seen in the Bible to this point.

Following the war against the Philistines, God tells Saul, “I remember *that* which Am'alek did to Israel, how he laid *wait* for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Am'alek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass” (1 Samuel 15:2-3). Saul leads his people against the Am'alek, but he does not destroy all the ox and sheep. He allows his men to take home the best and most choice of the animals. He also takes the leader Agag prisoner rather than slaughtering him as well. God then tells Samuel of Saul's misdeeds. Samuel confronts Saul informs him of God's anger. “The LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel” (1 Samuel 15:35). This shows a definite switch in his character. [Whose? God's or Sauls—ambiguous/vague pronoun reference] He goes from being protagonist to antagonist in seconds for arguing the semantics of God's decree.

From here it seems that God decided to haunt Saul. He had Samuel convey his blessing onto David son of Jesse. David was summoned to court to soothe an “evil spirit from the LORD” (1 Samuel 16:14). David then assumes the role of protagonist as Saul becomes envious of the fame David receives at war against the Philistine and Goliath. He plans to kill David by sending him on a suicide mission to recover 200 foreskins from the Philistines as a dowry for the marriage of his daughter. David with God on his side manages this so Saul takes a more direct approach when further tempted by the evil spirit of God inside him. He tries to kill David twice. David escaped Saul with the help of Saul' son Jonathan and his daughter Michal. David later has two chances to kill Saul but decides to leave that in God's hands. **God eventually forces Saul into a losing battle that he and his three sons decide to impale themselves on their own swords.**

Saul is traditionally seen as the despot King who disobeyed God and needed to be punished. However, in a society such s the present day United States know for its civil liberties and ability to question leadership, **Saul can be seen as hero who decided to stand up against God's constant hypocriticalness.** God decreed that no man shall murder another and that wrath is one of the seven deadly sins, but he punished Saul for not murdering and slaughtering every single baby and woman in Am'alek and carrying out God's personal

vendetta. In a way Saul is a defender of free will and civil liberties and even proved God wrong. “The LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel” (1 Samuel 15:35)

Wow—what an argument! I’m assuming this project is the character analysis, however—right?

EXPECTATIONS AND GRADING FOR GENERAL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (Adopted from Deborah A. Stewart's Effective Teaching: A Guide for Community College Instructors)				
WRITER:		PROJECT = ()		
	EXCELLENT (A-B)	GOOD (B-C)	FAIR (C-D)	WEAK (D-F)
Focus MAX=20	Clear, central thesis & purpose; addresses all aspects of thesis. (19-20 points)	Clear, central thesis & purpose; addresses most aspects of the thesis (17-18 points)	Clear thesis & purpose, but too broad or unfocused (15-16 points)	Thesis is unclear, unsupportable, vague or confusing; purpose is unclear. (14 or less points)
Content MAX=10	Good background info; comprehensive approach; excellent insight into topic; evidence of strong reflective analysis and keen awareness of audience (10 points)	Satisfactory background info; comprehensive approach; good insight into topic; evidence of good reflective analysis and general awareness of audience. (8-9 points)	Some background info, but offers only routine or general insight into topic; evidence of some reflective analysis; may have a few inconsistencies in addressing audience and purpose (6-7 points)	Too much or too little info; may be too specialized or personal for general audience; evidence of weak reflective analysis; inconsistencies detract from text's overall development (5 or less points)
Support MAX=10	Excellent support drawn from student's experience and knowledge; examples work to enhance and deepen the focus of the thesis (10 points)	Good support drawn from student's experience and knowledge; examples work to illustrate the focus of the thesis (8-9 points)	Support comes primarily from either student's experience or knowledge; examples work only minimally to support the focus of the thesis (6-7 points)	Support may be irrelevant or unsubstantiated; examples may contradict or offer little support for the focus of the thesis (5 or less points)
Organization & Structure MAX=20	Clear, logical progression of ideas; argument builds in strength; paper contains clear, engaging introduction that previews the paper's main argument; paper has coherent, well-developed paragraphs and uses transitional phrases effectively; paper also contains strong conclusion, which draws together and summarizes main points	Clear, logical progression of ideas, although some parts of argument may be stronger and more developed than others; good use of paragraphs to develop and organize main points; uses a number of transitional phrases to signal shifts and connections; paper contains clearly defined introduction and conclusion	Halting progression of ideas; some parts of argument may be weak or out of balance with others; a few undeveloped paragraphs and phrases; paper contains an introduction and conclusion, but they may be weak or generalized (15-16 points)	Paragraphs seem out of order; argument is undeveloped and paragraphs may be lacking clear transitions (14 or less points)

	(19-20 points)	(17-18 points)			
Written Quality MAX=20	Uses college-level vocabulary; varies sentences and wording; uses vivid examples; has strong, consistent voice and appears fluent in nature (19-20 points)	Uses college-level vocabulary; varies sentences and wording; uses good examples but may fluctuate in tone or voice or fluency (17-18 points)	Uneven quality of writing; relies heavily on two or three types of sentences; redundant in places; choppy or halting voice (15-16 points)	Unclear, unvaried sentences; suffers from wordiness, slang or underdeveloped thoughts; distracting gestures; lists examples,, rather than combining for complex sentences (14 or less points)	
Mechanics MAX=20	Excellent grammar, spelling, usage, and punctuation; paper flows effortlessly and reads well (19-20 points)	Good use of grammar and mechanics; not more than 5-7 errors per page; paper flows well (17-18 points)	Fair use of grammar and mechanics; errors are mostly minor in nature; paper is readable despite some distractions (15-16 points)	Frequent or consistent errors in grammar and mechanics; interferes substantially with readability of paper (14 or less points)	
FOCUS = 19	CONTENT = 9	SUPPORT = 10	ORGANIZATION & STRUCTURE = 18	WRITTEN QUALITY = 18	MECHANICS = 18

COMMENTS: TOTAL = 92 Your character analysis is very nice, especially in light of the persuasive aspects of it. Since it is persuasive, I am assuming this would be your PERSUASIVE paper and that you will submit your 10% option later. –I see now it is indeed the character analysis—well-incorporated into the actual persuasive paper.