

4-Paragraph Essay Topics on **Breathing Room**

- 1) Though Evvy spends much of the novel away from her parents, her relationship with each parent is important. Develop an essay with one body paragraph devoted Evvy's relationship with her father and a second paragraph focused on her mother.
Do the relationships change over the course of the novel? Why? How?
By novel's end, how has Evvy changed in any ways because of her parents' influence or help?
How does each parent help her?
- 2) Throughout the story, characters give and receive gifts from each other. Pick two gifts and explain the significance of each—both to the giver and to the receiver—and to the story overall.
- 3) Compare and contrast Nurse Marshall and Nurse Gunderson in the novel. What is each nurse's strength? How does Evvy benefit from each nurse's skills? How does each affect Evvy?
- 4) Compare and contrast the opening and closing chapters of the novel. Consider the changes in Evvy and her relationship with each of her parents.
- 5) Compare and contrast Evvy's relationship with Sarah and Dena. What struggles does Evvy have with each girl? What does she learn from each? How does Evvy help them both? Can you draw any conclusions about the importance of friendship during difficult times?
- 6) Though Pearl and Dena are not the main characters in the novel, they both still have a profound impact on Evvy and her experience at Loon Lake Sanatorium. Discuss each character and her importance in the novel.
- 7) The brochure for Loon Lake Sanatorium (found after Chapter 1) encourages new arrivals to be "patient patients." Does this always describe Evvy? Describe ways she both learns to accept the rules at Loon Lake and ways in which she rejects them. Is she right or wrong for choosing to disobey? What are the consequences? What are the benefits?