

## 5-Paragraph Essay Topics on **Breathing Room**

- 1) Nurse Marshall tells Evvy in Chapter 6 that she is not at Loon Lake “to make friends “but to defeat her disease. By novel’s end, Evvy might say that she could not do one without the other. Consider what Evvy learns from the other girls, especially Pearl, Dena and Sarah, over the course of the story about herself, survival, and friendship. Devote a paragraph to each of the three girls OR organize your essay by comparing and contrasting what Evvy learns from each girl about herself, survival, and friendship.

Keep in mind the following:

Would Evvy call each of these girls a friend? Why or why not? Does that change?

How does Evvy grow and gain insight by knowing each of these girls?

- 2) If *Breathing Room* is a survival story, consider three skills or strategies Evvy develops that help her through the experience.  
Keep in mind the following:  
How is Evvy different by the novel’s end? Why?  
How does Evvy overcome setbacks? Does she always succeed?
- 3) Compare and contrast the three secret journeys Evvy makes throughout the story. What is the purpose of each trip? What does Evvy learn about others and herself? What are the implications of each of these journeys for Evvy and for other characters in the novel?
- 4) The author uses the word “different” in the titles of three chapters. Those chapters each signal a major change for Evvy. Analyze what makes each chapter significant in Evvy’s larger journey as a patient at Loon Lake.
- 5) Throughout the story, characters give and receive gifts from each other. Pick three gifts and explain the significance of each –both to the giver and to the receiver—and to the story overall.
- 6) Analyze the importance of Evvy’s relationship with her brother Abe throughout the novel—from her first days at Loon Lake, through the letters they exchange and her thoughts about them, and finally the events at the close of the story. In what way is their relationship key to Evvy’s sense of herself? How do her feelings change about Abe over the course of the novel? How does having a twin both help and hinder Evvy throughout the story?