Paul’s Case – Short Essay

You have annotated the short story “Paul’s Case” during your class and home readings, collecting evidence for the specific essay prompts below. Choose one of these options to develop a thematic, argumentative composition, citing at least five pieces of specific evidence from the text, followed by interpretive lead-outs pointing towards a clear, original thesis.

Choose from one of the following prompts:

A. Is Paul a confident, emotionally healthy person? Does he have the world figured out? Should we admire him? How are we meant to feel about people like Paul?   
**What to cite:** Evidence of Paul’s self-image, the behaviors he exhibits, the moods and tones he feels toward others, his questionably immoral choices

B. What is Willa Cather’s tone towards different aspects of Paul’s environment? What observations about Paul’s world are we meant to notice?

**What to cite:** Evidence of tone in such places as the school, arts and entertainment, Paul’s home and family life, the cities (Pittsburgh and New York), Paul’s materialism, reactions of other minor characters

Tips:

* Consider Paul and the aspects of his environment as representative of elements in our own lives to lead you toward a more profound argument. I am looking for original, meaningful theses and lead-outs.
* Consider a mixture of quotes and paraphrases. Quotes are best for analyzing author’s style and word choice; paraphrases are best for citing plot and action.
* Consider different options in organization. A paper with this many citations might have two body paragraph points of focus, one slightly larger than the other. However, all five pieces of evidence might go together in one large body paragraph.
* Build a fluid short introduction paragraph. Begin with a focus on the topic first, then the story, then the thesis.
* Proofread carefully, aloud if possible, to catch grammatical errors and phrasal awkwardness.
* Give the piece a clever title. Do not title it “Paul’s Case”
* Refer to your previous essay and the error markings to ensure improvement.

**PLEASE NOTE THE DISTRICT AND DEPARTMENT POLICIES ON ACADEMIC HONESTY AND PLAGIARISM. ACCESSING HELP FROM OTHERS OR OUTSIDE RESOURCES, PRINTED OR ONLINE, RESULTS IN A ZERO ON THE ASSIGNMENT.**