

Sample Argumentative Multi-Paragraph Outline

Prompt: Choose one of the symbols from *The House on Mango Street*. Write a four-paragraph analytical essay to explain what the symbol represents and how it helps develop the reader's understanding of the characters and or setting.

Claim: In *The House on Mango Street*, names symbolize the exploration of one's identity and how individuals can be shaped by others, revealing the characters' internal conflicts.

Reason 1:

Name symbolizes conflicted feelings about identity.

Topic Sentence: In the vignette "My Name," Esperanza's name symbolizes her conflicted feelings about her identity.

Supporting Details:

- Name means one thing in Spanish and a different thing in English → "In English, my name means hope. In Spanish, it means too many letters" (10).
- Name represents conflict about identity → "At school they say my name funny as if the syllables were made out of tin and hurt the roof of your mouth. But in Spanish my name is made out of a softer something, like silver" (11).
- Esperanza wishes she had a name that showed her agency and independence → "I would like to baptize myself under a new name, a name more like the real me, the one nobody sees, Esperanza as Lisandra or Maritza or Zeze the X" (11).
- Esperanza is worried about how others will react to her name → "Who are you? And I wish my name was Cassandra or Alexis or Maritza—anything but Esperanza—but when I tell them my name, they don't laugh" (15).

Reason 2:

Names symbolize the power others have to shape our identity.

Topic Sentence: In "Meme Ortiz" and in "Geraldo No Last Name," names symbolize how others have the power to shape and influence one's identity.

Supporting Details:

- Meme's name is Juan, but everyone calls him Meme → "His name isn't really

Meme. His name is Juan. But when we asked him what his name was, he said Meme, and that's what everybody calls him except his mother" (21).

- Geraldo is an immigrant who came to the US. Others looked at him and unfairly made assumptions based on stereotypes → "Just another *brazier* who didn't speak English. Just another *wetback*" (66).
- Didn't have a last name, felt like he needed to hide a part of his identity in the US, power of the system → "Geraldo No Last Name" (65) and "Geraldo. That's all" (65).