**Human Nature: Good or Evil? – Essay Assignment**

As individuals we have choices about what direction our lives take us. Ultimately, what we choose is our decision: however, are our decisions influenced by what we are deep inside? Is there a common human nature in all of us: if so, is that nature good or evil?

Throughout history philosophers, great thinkers, and “every day” people have discussed human tendencies. From the early dynasties of the Chinese to the Enlightenment thinkers of eighteenth century Europe, this topic has been hotly debated. For this assignment, we focus in particular on the Enlightenment thinkers Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, who proposed different opinions regarding human nature. Hobbes believed that humans were naturally selfish, greedy, and cruel, while Locke contended that people were naturally reasonable and moral.

Now it is your turn. You are to defend whether you agree with Hobbes or Locke through a classroom debate. Do you believe people to be naturally good or naturally bad, and why**? I WILL BE CHOOSING WHICH SIDE YOU ARE TO DEFEND TO EVEN THE SIDES OF THE CLASS IN EACH DEBATE**. First, answer the questions below that support the ideas of Hobbes or Locke. You must answer each question in complete sentences. The better you answer these questions, the better your debate will be. You should also discuss other thinkers and events throughout history as well as personal experiences to strengthen your argument with each question. For example, are there people in history that make Hobbes or Locke’s argument stronger? Are their events that make either Enlightened thinkers argument stronger? You are allowed to do research to add more examples. Formulate a thesis that states your beliefs and support your thesis each arguing a different point. **YOU WILL BE TURNING THESE QUESTIONS IN, SO THE BETTER YOU WRITE OUT THESE QUESTIONS, THE BETTER A GRADE YOU WILL GET.**

**Also, you must make at least one comment during this classroom debate. IF you do not contribute to the debate what so ever, you will get major points off your final grade for this assignment.**

**Rubric for Assignment:**

**Writing 45 points**: Students will answer each question in complete sentences. They will follow directions by taking a stance on the Enlightened Thinker that they were assigned. The students will answer each question to the best of their abilities **(AT LEAST 2 sentences for each question so you are able to answer the question and explain your thoughts**. The students will list specific examples when asked within the question with extended details. Failure to write out within these guidelines will result in points off on the assignment.

**Debate Contribution 15 points**: Students will give at least one comment that is constructive to the debate. The students can use their questions that they answered in order to help them with the debate. The students comments will determine how many points they receive on this portion Students will also use appropriate language. Failure to do so with lower their grade substantially. HINT: The more you speak during the debate, the better chances you get full credit for this portion of the assignment.

**Focus Question**: *Are humans naturally good or evil?*

**Supplemental Questions:** You must answer the *questions below*. You have to answer all questions listed below. The better you answer these questions, the better you will be able to debate against your other teams.

**1. With whom do you agree: Hobbes or Locke? Only need to put the name of who you are defending.**

2. Are people naturally cruel, greedy, and selfish (Hobbes) or are people basically reasonable and moral (Locke)? Explain.

3. If there are not established laws, would people fight, rob, and attack one another without constraint (Hobbes) or a guilty conscience (Locke)? Explain and list examples

4. Do people know “right” from “wrong”? Explain. (Hobbes-people do not know) (Locke-people do know)

5. Do people generally live in fear? Provide examples. (This could be either depending on your definition of fear b/c it is used in different ways)

6. Are people in constant battle with others, that is, man v. man (Hobbes)? Or, do people generally wish to cooperate with one another - that is, man with man (Locke)?

7. Do people consider the consequences of their actions and how those actions will affect others (Locke) or do people not think of their consequences because they are concerned about themselves (Hobbes)? Explain Why or Why not?

8. What would life and human relations be like in the absence of government?

9. What view is more realistic? (Hobbes v. Locke, Good v. Evil, Selfish v. Kind)