

# Elements of an Excellent Essay

*What do you already know?*

# Your Next Essential Skill Assignment

- \* An exam on elements (terms & characteristics) which an excellent essay would contain.
- \* In this short unit, you will study quality essays – not write them.
- \* **You are expected to internalize what you learn and apply it to all writing tasks in all classes for the rest of your academic career.**

# Find these terms! – use PENCIL

Evidence

Concluding sentence

Topic Sentence

Lead/Hook

Introduction

Body Paragraph

Concluding Paragraph

Analysis

Bridge/Exposition

Thesis Statement

Rephrased Thesis

Closing Thought

Summary of Main Points

Chunk

Opinion

Subject

Transition

# THESIS STATEMENT

Contained in *INTRODUCTION*

**Thesis Statement:** CONTROLS THE ENTIRE ESSAY.

- \* It is the opinion/claim/argument that will be proven in the essay.
  - \* Every sentence in the essay needs to support the thesis somehow.
  - \* Every **Topic Sentence** needs to directly tie back to the thesis.
- 1) Find the thesis in “The Violent Waltz” and draw a box around it.
  - 2) Number the items the author will prove in this essay.

# BODY PARAGRAPHS

Body paragraphs contain:

Topic Sentence

Evidence

Analysis

Chunk

Concluding Sentence

*Yes,  
Highlight!*

# BODY PARAGRAPHS

Yes,  
highlight!

**Topic Sentence:** The first sentence in a body paragraph.  
It states what will be discussed/proven in that paragraph.

\* Ties directly to one item-to-be-proven in **Thesis**.

1) *Find the topic sentence . Label it and then highlight the whole sentence GREEN. What will be discussed in this paragraph?*

# BODY PARAGRAPHS

**Evidence:** An example the writer presents which helps to prove the claim the Topic Sentence makes.

- \* **Can be:** A quote, fact, or anything concrete which can be explained or interpreted.
- \* **Must** be blended in as part of a sentence – you cannot just drop in quotes without context – words around the quote which help introduce it.

- 1) Find the evidence in the body paragraph. Highlight it yellow.
- 2) Also highlight the context (or sentence) around the quote.

# BODY PARAGRAPHS

**Analysis:** The writer's explanation of how the evidence supports the claim.

- \* Analyses (plural) **Level 2:** must always explain the evidence to the reader – what does it mean that the author does not explain? What is here but not obvious?
- \* They must always tie the evidence back to the topic sentence and the thesis.
- \* Analysis **Level 3:** Connecting the idea to the larger world beyond the text.

1) *Find the analyses in the body paragraph. Highlight it pink.*



# BODY PARAGRAPHS

**Chunk:** an evidence and analysis pairing. 2 are needed for a formal body paragraph.

1) *How many chunks are in the this body paragraph?*

# BODY PARAGRAPHS

Yes,  
highlight!

**Concluding Sentence:** The last sentence of a body paragraph.

- \* If it is in the LAST body paragraph of the essay, it should work to conclude the arguments that BP presented and transition the reader from BPs to Conclusion.
  - \* If it is in any other BP, it should conclude that BP's arguments and transition the reader into the next paragraph.
- 1) *Find the concluding sentence in the first BP of the essay. Highlight the whole sentence GREEN.*

# INTRODUCTION

Lead or Hook

Bridge or Exposition

Thesis

*Label the introductory paragraph.*

# INTRODUCTION

**Lead or Hook:** The first line of the essay.

- \* It should clearly introduce the subject of the *essay (the book, poem, historical event, etc. the essay will be about)*
- \* It should grab the reader's attention in a sophisticated way.
- \* It should be meaningful to the essay as a whole and create a foundation for the thesis.

*Find the lead or hook in this essay & label it*

# INTRODUCTION

**Bridge or Exposition or GDT:** 1-2 sentences which bridges the hook to the thesis.

- \* It should create a strong foundation so that the thesis is clear (and packs some punch!)
- \* It should be meaningful to the essay as a whole and provide background which might be useful later.

*Find the bridge/exposition in this essay and label it. What is it talking about?*

# INTRODUCTION

**Thesis Statement:** Write this and then draw an arrow to the notes above where you defined a thesis statement.

**Add:**

- \* Thesis should be sure to restate subject.
- \* It should flow clearly and logically from the Hook and the Bridge.

# CONCLUSION

**Concluding Paragraph** – this is the last item that your reader will read in your essay. Your Intro + BP's could have been fantastic, but a disappointing conclusion could leave a reader feeling like it was all for nothing.

Rephrased Thesis

Summary of Main Points

Concluding/Closing Thought

**NO NEW INFORMATION**

*Label the concluding paragraph.*

# CONCLUSION

**Rephrase Thesis:** Open the conclusion by rephrasing thesis in a powerful way.

- \* The reader has now heard all of your arguments so the thesis is clearer and can be said with more artfulness.

*Find where the rephrased thesis should go in this essay – how can I revise this sentence so it serves its purpose better?*



# CONCLUSION

**Summary of Main Points:** Summarize the main points without being repetitive. This might take 1-2 sentences.

\* Make connections so that this summary is meaningful for the reader.

*Find where the SMP should go in this essay – how can I revise this sentence so it serves its purpose better?*

# CONCLUSION

**Closing Thought:** The lingering thought you want your reader to walk away with. Many argue that this is the most difficult sentence to write in the entire essay.

**It should attempt to:**

- \* Leave the reader without a rebuttal against your thesis.
- \* Leave the reader fulfilled at the end of your essay.
- \* Leave the reader thinking about his or her own thoughts about the subject.

**IT SHOULD NEVER BE A QUESTION.**

*How does Ms. Peralta's Closing Thought match up?*