

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### **The Analytical Paragraph – The 7 Basic Components**

You write an analytical paragraph (note: a body paragraph of an essay is the same thing as an analytical paragraph) in response to an analytical question. For example, you would not respond in an analytical paragraph to the question - *What is the plot of the novel Animal Farm?* However, you would respond in an analytical paragraph to this question – *In Animal Farm, do the pigs abuse come to abuse their power? If so, how? If not, how do they stay in line with the power originally assigned to them?* The analytical paragraph lays out and explains the evidence that supports your thesis. Each analytical paragraph should include the following:

**1. Topic Sentence** – This tells the reader what your paragraph is about; it is the main idea of that paragraph. It should be the first sentence of your paragraph. If you are writing an essay the topic sentence will connect to the **thesis** of your essay. Your topic sentence can not be a factual statement. It must be something that can be argued for or against.

**2a. Context of Evidence** – For each quote you choose, you must orient the reader to what is going on in the text or the historical background. What is happening *in* the text in the pages where your quotation is found in the book. As a rule, do not write more than two sentences of context.

**2b. Evidence Introduction** – For each piece of evidence you use you must identify who says, writes, or thinks it. From whom do these words come? For a history essay make sure to include some sort of title with the person's name so that the reader knows why that person is qualified to be an expert on the historical topic.

The basic form of the evidence introduction is the subject + verb + quote:

*Bart says*, "Cool! I love detentions!" (19) or *Matt Groening writes*, "Bart ran away"(2). You need to include the "Bart says" or "Groening writes", or else your sentence is incomplete.

A more sophisticated form of the evidence introduction weaves the quote into your own writing (what I have termed as quote blending – see yellow pages page ?). In this form the context and the quote become one.

*On his way to school, Bart does not hesitate to "pull out his slingshot and launch a rock through the window"(15).*

If your evidence is long and complex, use a colon instead of a comma before the presentation of your evidence.

*Bart is a dreamer. He believes:* (long and complex evidence goes here)

**2c. Evidence** – This is a short sentence or passage which you copy directly or paraphrase from the text because you want to use it as evidence to prove your topic sentence and/or thesis. You need to put quotation marks ("...") around anything copied directly because the words are written by somebody else. Both quotations and paraphrases should be followed by some sort of citation.

**2d. Citation** – Put the page number (or author and page number if more than one source is being used) to indicate where your citation may be found. The page number is placed at the end of the evidence presented in parenthesis. Do not include the following: *page, pages, p., book title, etc.* Just the number is all you need.

*Bart complains, "I hate peas" (18).*

*World War II proved to be the most devastating war in which the U.S. ever fought (Ambrose 35).*

**2e. Analysis** – Explain in your own words how the evidence supports your topic sentence. Break the evidence down. Talk about specific words, phrases, or ideas found in the evidence. Make specific connections between your evidence and the topic sentence (also connect it to the thesis in an essay). Do not just restate the evidence or summarize the story. Analysis must be a minimum of five (5) sentences.

**3. Concluding Sentence** – This sentence answers the question "what's your point?". If you are writing an essay, and this is one of your body paragraphs, then this sentence serves to connect back to the topic sentence.