

## IHS / Expository Writing

Each student will learn to structure a formal, academic essay. This involves writing a thesis that analyzes rather than summarizes, using the topic sentences of the body paragraphs to support that thesis, and selecting and arranging quoted and paraphrased evidence from a text to support the topic sentence of each paragraph.

### Elements of Each Paragraph

#### Introduction

- ❑ Attention Grabber: a sentence or two that draws interest toward the topic of the essay
- ❑ Establish General Topic: Four to five sentences that simply and clearly establish the title of the work, the author's first and last name, some background information on the plot of the work and the general focus of the essay.
- ❑ Thesis Statement: A clear and complete statement of the main argument of the essay. This will be the last sentence of the introduction, and it should provide a specific focus for the rest of the essay. In this case, it should also answer the given prompt.

Body Paragraphs: The essay should include 3 body paragraphs. Each of the body paragraphs should do the following:

- ❑ Topic sentence for each body paragraph that introduces a reason why the thesis is true.
- ❑ Two to three sentences that give thorough, accurate and specific support for the topic sentence of each body paragraph.
- ❑ First specific reference to the text, which is either a brief quote with citation or a paraphrased section of text with citation. Must have a transitional piece before or after. Cannot stand on its own.
- ❑ Three or Four sentences that give thorough, accurate and specific support for the argument you are trying to support with your quote or paraphrase.
- ❑ Second specific reference to the text, which is either a brief quote with citation or a paraphrased section of text with citation. Must have a transitional piece before or after. A quote cannot stand on its own.
- ❑ Three or Four sentences that give thorough, accurate and specific support for the argument you are trying to support with your quote or paraphrase.
- ❑ Accurate MLA Style for in-text citations of paraphrased or quoted materials and accurate punctuation around quotes in each body paragraph.
- ❑ Logical sequence of thoughts within each body paragraph.

- ❑ Concluding Sentence that reminds the audience of how the paragraph proved the topic sentence true.

## Conclusion

- ❑ Main points summarized.
- ❑ Transition into restatement of thesis.
- ❑ Restatement of Thesis.
- ❑ Ending sentence that concludes the essay with why the ideas in the thesis matter.

## Examples and Further Explanations

### Effectively using direct quotes in paragraphs:

First, make sure the quote or quotes that you choose for each paragraph fit into your argument and thereby support the paragraph's topic sentence (which in turn supports your thesis).

Second, introduce each quote with its context in the same sentence where you use the quote. At a very minimum, you should include which character is speaking in the sentence where you put the quote.

If the quote comes from a dialogue, or an extended monologue with other characters still on stage listening to it, then you should also include to whom the character is speaking. As context, you may also want to briefly mention the setting for the quote, the action in the scene, and whether the quote comes from a dialogue, a monologue or a soliloquy.

After you have introduced the quote in your sentence, and you are ready to begin the quote, put a comma and begin quotation mark.

If your quote is from a place Shakespeare and Shakespeare is writing in verse, then put a space-slash-space where the line ends. At the end of the quote, put an end quotation mark, a citation with act, scene and line number(s), and then the ending punctuation for your sentence.

For example:

- When the herald announces that the Turkish fleet has been destroyed, he says, "upon certain tidings now arrived importing the mere perdition of the Turkish fleet, every man put himself into triumph" (1.2.2-3).
- After Brabantio has accused Othello of kidnapping Desdemona, a Senator asks Othello, "Did you by indirect and forced courses / Subdue and poison this young maid's affections?" (1.3.111-12).

After each quote, pause and interpret it, analyzing its significance for the argument in this paragraph before continuing on to introduce the next quote or to wrap up the paragraph.

### **Paraphrasing:**

Paraphrasing is when you put a specific set of lines into your own words, often summarizing them.

If you have a longer set of lines than you would want to quote in a brief paragraph, paraphrasing is a good alternative. Any time the exact word choice does not matter as much as the meaning of the lines for your argument, it is a viable alternative.

In any case, paraphrased lines should still be cited just like quoted lines, in this case with act, scene and line number. For example, the lines quoted above could be paraphrased as:

- A herald announces that the Turkish fleet has been destroyed and invites every soldier in the Venetian army to celebrate (1.2.2-3)
- After Brabantio has accused Othello of kidnapping Desdemona, a Senator asks him directly if he did so (1.3.111-12).

### **Additional tips:**

**Remember not to use I, me or you in an academic essay.** Words to consider using instead of “you” include:

- The audience
- The readers
- The characters (and which ones?)
- The author

The introduction and the conclusion should be about the same length. As well as body paragraphs should be balanced and reflect an equal length.

## *Expository Essay Outline*

**Name:**

**Date:**

**Topic:**

**INTRODUCTION ATTENTION GRABBER:** A sentence or two that draws interest toward the topic of this essay.

**ESTABLISH GENERAL TOPIC OF ESSAY:** A few sentences that simply and clearly establish the title of the novel, the author's first and last name, and the general focus of this essay.

**THESIS STATEMENT:** A clear complete statement of the main argument of the essay. This will be the **last** sentence of the introduction, and it should provide a specific focus for the rest of the essay. In this case, the thesis statement should also answer the question to which this essay responds.

**II. BODY PARAGRAPH:** Each of the 3 body paragraphs should follow this format and they should be similar in length:

- **TOPIC SENTENCE:** One supporting argument for the thesis:

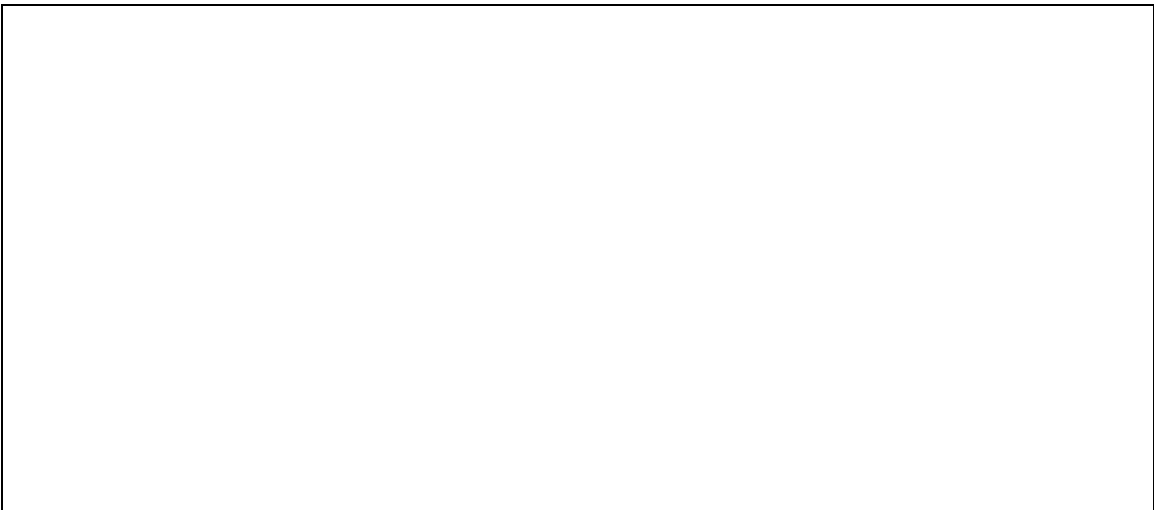
Two to three sentences that give thorough, accurate and specific support for the topic sentence of the body paragraph.

First specific reference to the text, which is either a brief quote with citation or a paraphrased section of text with citation.

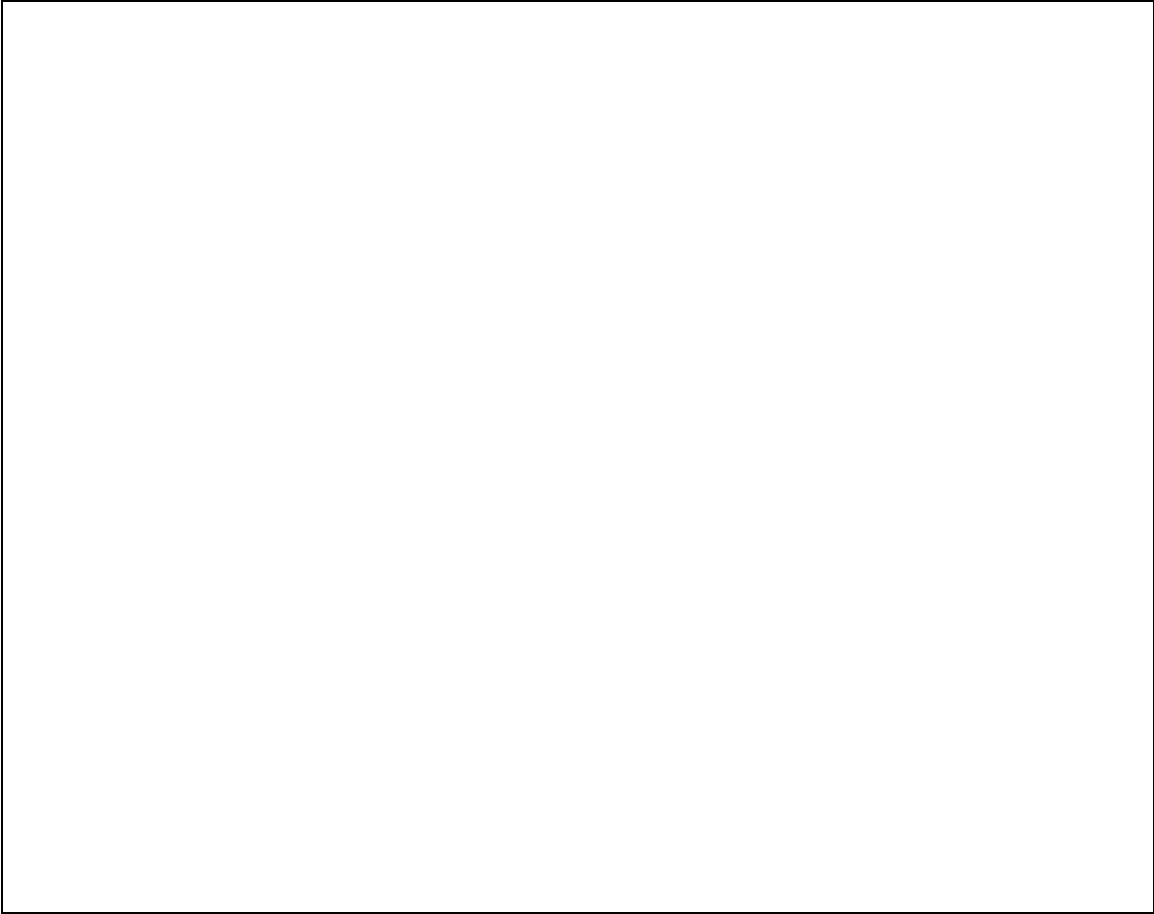
Three to four sentences that give thorough, accurate and specific support for the argument you are trying to support with your quote or paraphrase. THIS IS YOUR ANALYSIS AND THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR BODY PARAGRAPH. Why does the quote or paraphrase you chose support your argument?



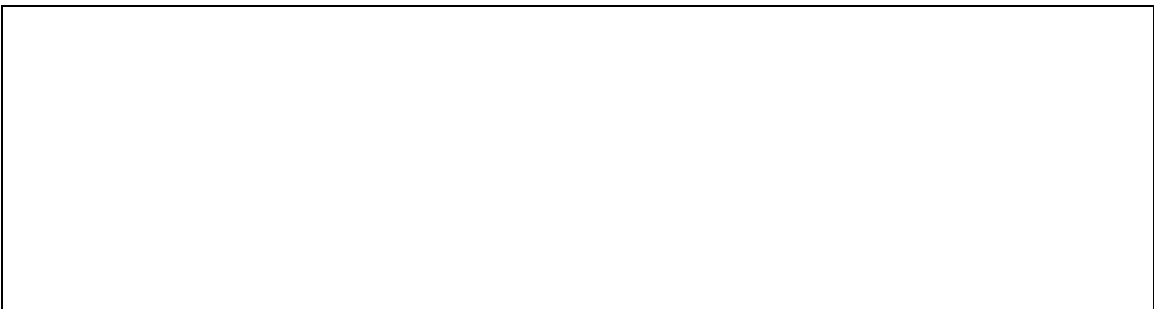
Second specific reference to the text, which is either a brief quote with citation or a paraphrased section of text with citation.



Three to four sentences that give thorough, accurate and specific support for the argument you are trying to support with your quote or paraphrase. THIS IS YOUR ANALYSIS AND THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR BODY PARAGRAPH. Why does the quote or paraphrase you chose support your argument?



Concluding Sentence that reminds the audience of how the paragraph proved the topic sentence true.



### III. CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH (should match the length of the introduction paragraph)

Three to four sentences of the main points summarized:

Transition into statement of thesis:

Restatement of thesis: A thoughtful, original, creative summary, rewording, or review of the **thesis**. Please do not just cut and paste the original thesis. Also, be careful to avoid introducing any new ideas here; this is a restatement of what has already proven.

Ending sentence that concludes why the thesis in the essay matters.