



All New 2021 Version

Connecting the Dots with Mr. S

**Worksheets to help you navigate
your way from prompt to thesis to essay**

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Connecting the Dots with Mr. S – 1

“Oh no, not an Essay!”

Writing an essay does not have to be an evil menace.

So, you have to write an essay about a text for your English class. Yes, it happens. Many times, every year you are in school, it happens. So you can grit your teeth, put it off for the last minute, or ignore it totally and hope you get a snow day. But with the advent of distance learning, snow days are a thing of the past, like rabbit ear antennas, records, and flip phones.

Instead of getting angry or stressed – get a clue. In fact, here are a bunch of clues to make writing an essay a better event for you (and for your teacher who has to spend his or her nights and weekends reading all your papers, and who is hoping that the papers are worth reading).

Know what to do ... and where to get it all started.

An essay begins with a prompt – what your teacher asks you to write. Fine, we can look at those in detail so you can see the tricks teachers build into the prompts. Know these tricks and you'll know just how to give the teacher what he or she is looking for (and get better grades).

Then, you open an MLA Template – that blank document with all the right formatting set up already. With this open, you don't need to guess where to start.

Building your paper from three words: What, How, and Why.

Then, your essay really starts with one sentence. It's called a THESIS STATEMENT. This is the roadmap for the rest of your paper. You might as well get it right at the start, because the rest of the paper will be much easier if you do. And here is where those three words will help you. You only need to know WHAT and HOW and WHY to get it all done.

WHAT	WHAT does the prompt tell you to do? What is the main idea you are writing about?
HOW	HOW will you prove this WHAT? With what literary devices, author's clues, etc.?
WHY	WHY does this matter to anyone (you know, other than you and your teacher)?

Once you have your Thesis Statement you have your map for the rest of the paper. Trust the process here folks. Spend the time to get your Thesis Statement right and the rest of the paper will be well-organized and much EASIER to write. Because to write an essay, it's best to follow one key process: **Work Smarter, not Harder.**

This workbook can help you. Here's the smarter way to write your next essay.

Pulling apart Your Prompt

Before writing get a clue about what the teacher wants

Get a Clue

Does anyone ever read the directions? Go ahead, be honest, at least with yourself. OK, not only should you read them, but you should take a minute to draw all over them. The prompt has a number of clues hidden inside which tell you exactly what the teacher wants from you. Finding the clues takes about 2 minutes. Pull your prompt apart so you do not end up answering the wrong question or leaving out an important bit.

1. Look for the Clues:

They are there. So, read the question several times and consider what the prompt is telling you. Prompts usually include these elements, though sometimes there will only be one or two:

S
Q
R

- **A Statement** – a sentence that gives you some background information
- **A Question** – something that asks you to consider or analyze this information
- **A Requirement** – what you are expected to show in your answer

2. ✓ Check the Statement:

If the question gives you information, in the form of a sentence at the start of the prompt, remember that info is there for a reason. You are expected to make some reference to this information in your answer. Pay attention to this info at the start, to make sure you make the info the foundation for your answer. Put a check mark next to any statement to remind yourself to look back again at the end of writing and check to see if you have included this information in your answer. If there is no statement, the teacher is assuming you know what the subject of your essay should be focused on without one.

3. Underline the Question:

Next, underline the question (any statement ending in a question mark). Pay special attention to what it is asking you to do. Does this question sound familiar to you – maybe it reminds you of something you discussed in class?

4. Circle the Verbs/Key Words in the Requirement:

Then circle the verbs in the prompt; you'll find them in the Requirement. Words like "Analyze" or "Compare and Contrast," tell you what you are required to do in your answer. Be sure to circle all the verbs used, and PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION to any time the word "and" is used. The word "and" signals that you are required to show more than one thing in your answer.

The Prompt – page 2

Examples of Prompts for “Pulling Apart Your Prompt”

Here is a prompt from the Common Application used by many colleges for admission:

Prompt 1: *The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?*

Now “Pull Apart the Prompt” by ✓ checking the statement, underlining the question and circling the key words and conjunctions (connecting words like “and” or “but”).

✓ *The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success.*
Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?

Statement: ✓ “*The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success.*” This prompt gives you information to use in your answer. Once you check the statement, restate the info in your own words. This one might mean: we can learn from the problems we face in life.
HINT: Include this “info in your own words” in your answer to show you understood the prompt.

Requirement: “Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure.” Circle the verb recount. Ask yourself what that word means. To recount means “to retell a time when ...”
HINT: Look up the exact meaning of the verbs commonly used in prompts from the chart attached below.

Question: “How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?” Circle the word “and” when it appears in questions or requirements. This little word reminds you that you are being asked to do two things, not one. The underlined questions mean you are to explain how a problem made you feel or changed you, and what you learned from this problem. **HINT:** You need to have both in your answer in order to get full credit. You can bet your teacher will be looking for both parts in your answer.

Why Bother?

Do you really need to place a check mark, or underline words, or circle things in the prompt? Yes. Each helps you at the end of writing. Before turning in your essay, you go back and look at the marks in the prompt again to make sure you have used the info, answered the question, and done everything that was required of you.

Note: Sometimes there may not be a question or a statement. Don’t panic. If there is no information or question, simply focus on what’s in the Requirement. And write on.

Key Words Definitions for Pulling Apart Prompts

Account for Give reasons for, describe and explain in detail.

Analyze Break the information into smaller parts; then examine the relationship between the parts; and ask questions about any claims that have been made.

Argue Consider the evidence for your claim and against your claim; but, in the end, attempt to influence the reader to accept your view.

Balance Look at two or more viewpoints or pieces of information about a claim; give each equal attention; look at good and bad points; take into account many aspects and give an appropriate weighting to those arguments.

Be critical Identify what is good and bad about a claim and explain why you think it is good/bad; ask questions, identify inaccuracies or shortcomings in the information; estimate the value of the material.

Clarify Identify the components of an issue/topic/problem/; make the meaning plain; remove any misunderstandings.

Compare Look for similarities and differences between two claims or sets of information; then, conclude which has a better claim to truth or is more valuable.

Conclude Explain the results of an investigation; show how you have come to your final answer.

Contrast Bring out the differences between claims or sets of information.

Criticize Give your judgement on theories or opinions or facts, and back this judgement up by discussing the evidence you used or the reasoning involved in making your decision.

Deduce Conclude; infer. Make a logical guess based on any evidence available to you.

Define Give the precise meaning. Examine the different possible definitions.

Demonstrate Show clearly by giving proof or evidence.

The Prompt – page 4

Describe Give a detailed account of the topic, explaining what is involved in a claim.

Determine Find out something; calculate; show evidence you used to make a choice.

Develop Decide what you think (based on an argument or evidence); describe the process you used to reach that decision/opinion.

Discuss Investigate or examine by argument; debate; give reasons for and against; examine the implications of the topic. Do not simply retell, but explain in detail what it all means.

Estimate Calculate; judge; predict.

Evaluate Decide and explain the worth of something; assess value of a claim and explain.

Examine Look at carefully; consider in detail.

Explain Make plain and clear; give reasons for your claim.

Give evidence Provide evidence from your own work or the work of others which could be checked to prove or justify what you say.

Identify Point out and describe in detail.

Illustrate Explain, clarify, make clear by the use of concrete examples.

Infer Conclude something from facts or logical process of reasoning.

Interpret Explain meaning; make an idea clearly understood, give your own judgement.

Justify Show adequate reasons for a decision, a particular viewpoint or conclusion, and be sure to answer the main objections likely to be made to them (counterclaims).

Outline Give a short description of the main points; give the main features or general principles; emphasize structure in your answer, leaving out minor details.

Prove Show something is true or certain; provide strong evidence for your claim.

The Prompt – page 5

Recount or Review	Make a survey examining the subject carefully, giving details of the choice. Similar to the definitions for summarize or evaluate.
State	Present in a brief, clear form.
Support	Give evidence, explain why the evidence proves the claims you are making.
Summarize	Give a brief clear account of the chief points, removing unnecessary details.
Synthesize	Bring elements together to make a complex whole, draw together or integrate issues (e.g. theories or models can be created by synthesizing a number of elements).
Trace	Follow the development of topic from its origin, so, write chronologically.

Heavily adapted from *The Unit for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching UELT 2008, University of Kent*
https://www.kent.ac.uk/ai/ask/documents/step_1_Instruction_verbs.pdf

Pulling Apart a Prompt

SpongeBob Example

Prompt: *Since 1999, the cartoon series SpongeBob Squarepants has been a very popular TV show, winning many awards over its long run. During that time, the main character of SpongeBob has not undergone changes or character development, but has continued to walk naively through the challenges of life with a ready laugh and a smile on his face. Why is this character so popular? Describe the lessons about life SpongeBob teaches to its viewers and explain how these lessons are taught.*

Let's use the process we have learned for Pulling Apart the Prompt.

Statement: ✓ *"Since 1999, the cartoon series SpongeBob Squarepants has been a very popular TV show, winning many awards over its long run. During that time the main character of SpongeBob has not undergone changes or character development, but has continued to walk naively through the challenges of life with a ready laugh and a smile on his face."* Putting this in my own words I can say that SpongeBob is a generally happy character who teaches viewers to view life as an adventure no matter what the challenges may be. I will use this understanding of the information from the prompt in my answer to show I understood the prompt.

Question: "Why is this character so popular?" The underlined question assumes that the series has been popular due to some part of the main character's approach to life. To answer this question I should probably include the word "popular" in my answer as well.

Requirement: *"Describe the lessons about life SpongeBob teaches to its viewers and explain how these lessons are taught."* Circle the verbs "describe" and "explain," as well as the word "and." I can see that to "describe" means giving some details about what SpongeBob teaches us about life, and to "explain" will mean going into more depth about the ways in which he delivers these lessons to viewers. Remember: for full credit I need both of these in the essay.

Now that I know what I need to do, I can start to brainstorm about the character / text.
For example, what do I automatically think of when I hear the name SpongeBob? I can start to jot down the first things that come to mind, taking 2 to 3 minutes to complete this first step.

What should you be looking for? Check out the 5 steps of Brainstorming.

Brainstorming a Response to a Text

Overview of the 5 Steps before writing your essay

1. Brainstorm ideas: Take a couple of minutes – just a couple – and write down the first words that come into your head about a character or a text or a theme. Just short phrases will do. We'll call these “concepts.”

2. Scavenger Hunt / Search for Clues: Now go back to your text and look for a few clues that match up with these concepts. Ask yourself why you brainstormed those initial concepts, and find evidence in the text that explains specifically why you initially thought of them.

3. Search for a pattern: Next look at these concepts to see if you can identify a pattern of any sort. How do the words fit together? Do two or three of the concepts match up or look like they make a good pattern?

4. Write a Theme Statement: Choose a couple of the concepts/patterns you think work together best. Then, write a sentence about the character (or text or theme) using these concepts. Once you have written a sentence, shape this sentence into a more general statement about life, instead of a statement about just the one text you started with. Make sure you have written a complete sentence that makes sense when you think about the text, and also when you think about “life, the universe, and everything” else.

5. Chart it: There you go. You now have a Theme Statement. And you have the pieces you need to write an essay: these are the WHAT, the HOW's, and the WHY. With these three pieces, you can write anything from a 2 paragraph response to a 2 page paper about a text. All you need to do is fit these three pieces into the chart that follows – then use the models to build your Thesis Statement, Topic Sentences, Introductions, Conclusions, Evidence, etc.

Why Bother?

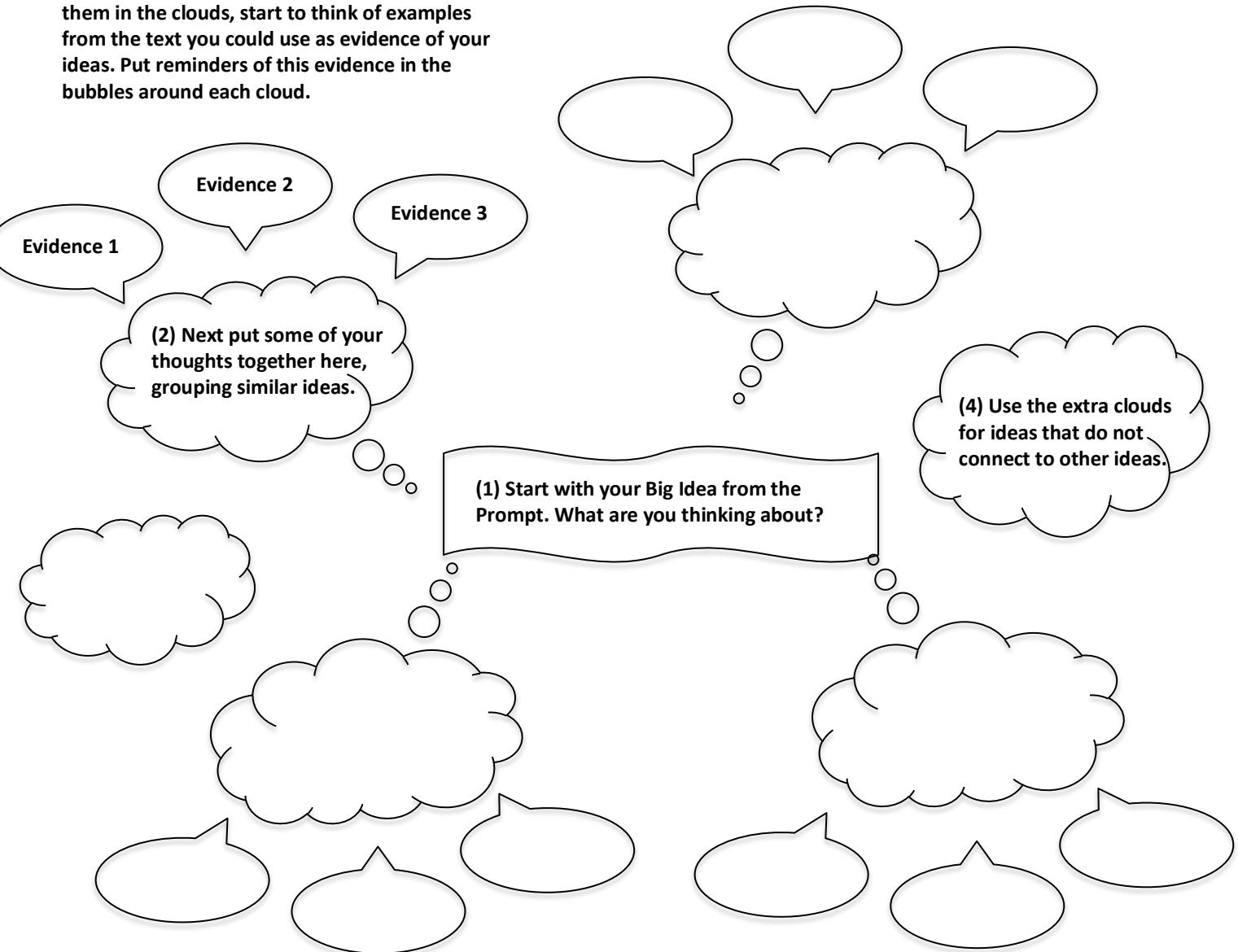
Once you have your Thesis Statement you have a map to the rest of your paper. Get the WHAT / HOW / WHY figured out at the start, and the rest of what you need to write is a simple case of filling in blanks and writing complete sentences. Skip this step and you won't know what to put where, and may end up staring at a blank screen for a long time.

A Thesis Statement is made up of combining a WHAT, some HOW's and a WHY.

Brainstorming a Response to a Text

Start with what comes to mind, then organize

(3) After you come up with some ideas and write them in the clouds, start to think of examples from the text you could use as evidence of your ideas. Put reminders of this evidence in the bubbles around each cloud.



Brainstorming Charts

The time you spend brainstorming will save you a lot of time and effort later when it comes to writing, and revising, your paper. Remember the Golden Rule of English:

Work Smarter, Not Harder!

Use this chart when it comes time to brainstorm your next essay. You can thank me later. (Note that the Thesis Statement at the bottom will be explained in the next handout.)

WHAT “Concepts”	Write in here the concepts you brainstormed about your text.	
HOWs “Evidence”	Write down 4-8 examples from your text which you could use to explain the Concept words in the WHAT. It helps to group these so you can have more than 1 example of each of the Concept words under WHAT.	<i>A blank chart is available for your use at the end of this workbook.</i>
WHY “Theme”	Using the WHAT words, and the best evidence (HOW’s), describe a universal idea you have discovered in the text. Write a complete sentence.	
THESIS STATEMENT “Assertion”	Using your WHAT and HOW’s and WHY you can now build your Assertion – your answer to the prompt or the main idea of your essay. Follow this model:	<p>In the [genre] [Title] by [Author’s full name], the author [verbs*] [WHAT]. Through the use of [HOW 1], and [HOW 2], the author [verbs*] [WHY].</p> <p>(* list of verbs to use is attached)</p>

Reference: Word Charts

Strong Verbs / Transition Words

Teachers read hundreds of essays every year. Trust me, you need your essay to be (1) memorable for all the right reasons, and (2) easy for your teacher to grade because it gives the teacher what she or he asked for and is expecting.

For your Thesis Statement (and throughout your essay)

Use strong verbs instead of weak, little verbs a third-grader would use. Do not, for example, talk about what the author “says” or “shows.” Also be careful not to use a Thesaurus to find the most important-sounding words you can so that your author “dissembles” or “divulges.”

Find the sweet spot with words like these:

analyzes	emphasizes	highlights	observes	reveals
confirms	establishes	illustrates	offers	suggests
considers	examines	implies	portrays	supposes
describes	explains	includes	presents	supports
develops	explores	indicates	promotes	thinks
displays	exposes	introduces	questions	underscores

For your Transitions throughout your essay

Transition words help you organize your ideas. They can also help your reader understand how one sentence or paragraph follows another. Here too, you want to use helpful words without falling into the trap of ending your paper with “In conclusion.” Never, never, type those words. **Instead, consider using these transition words whenever needed:**

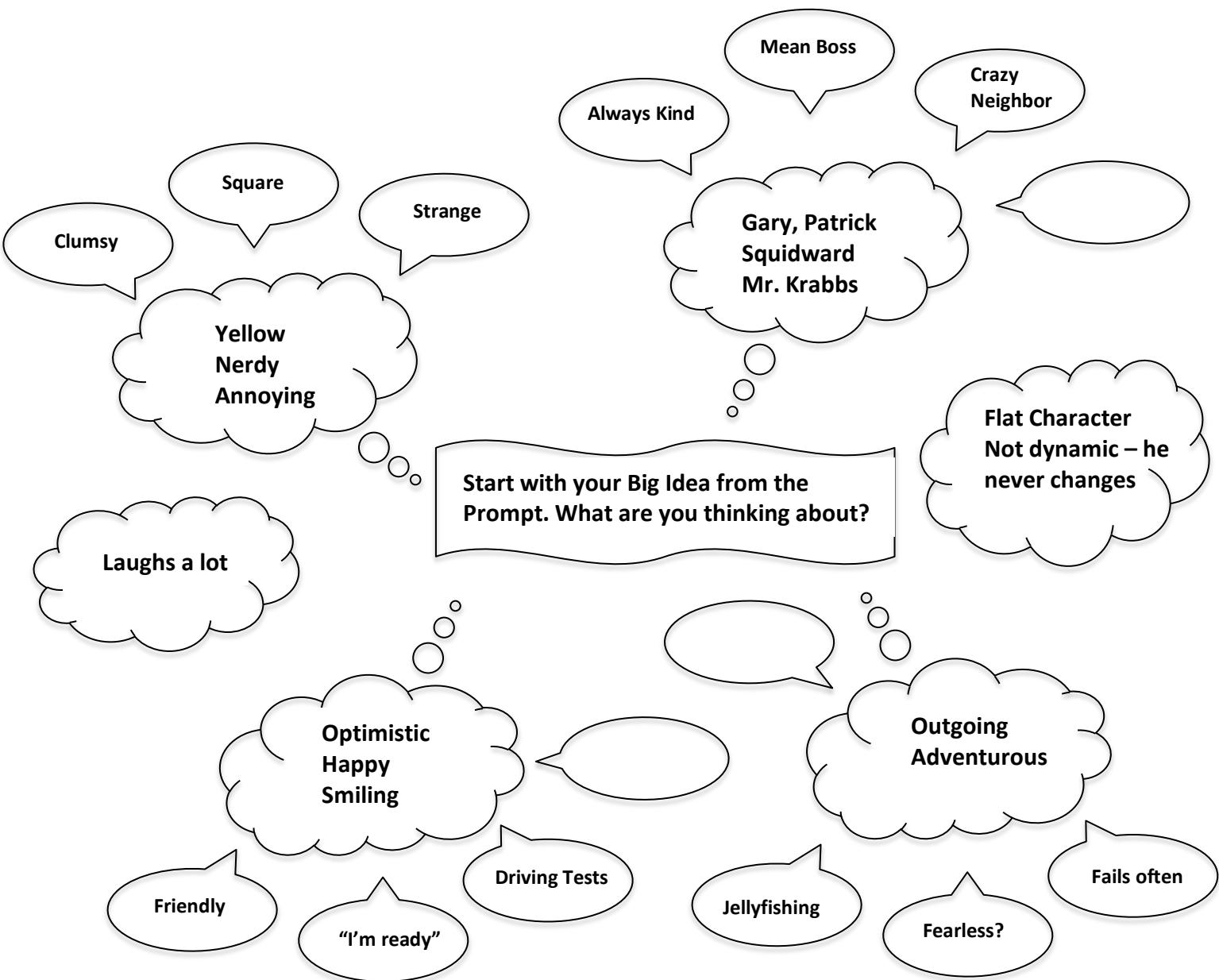
Addition	Timing	Illustration	Compare/Contrast	Cause/Effect
First (of all)	Before	For example	As, Like	Therefore, Thus
Second, Third ...	Previously	For instance	Just as, As with	Certainly
Also, Besides	Now	Such as	Whereas, Likewise	Consequently
In addition	Immediately	Including	In the same way	So, And so
Furthermore	Then	To be specific	Similarly	As a result
And, Further	Following	Specifically	But, Yet, Apart from	For this reason
Another, Again	Later	To illustrate	Instead, However	Since, Because
Again, Next	During	In other words	Although	If ... then
Moreover, Then	After	One instance	In comparison	Accordingly
Last, Finally	While	So, Thus	Still, Despite this	Due to
Subsequently	Eventually	In the case of	Even though	Leading to

Brainstorming Chart – Example 1

SpongeBob Example

Given the prompt about SpongeBob what comes to mind?

Thinking about what makes SpongeBob popular and what lessons he might have to teach us about life, I started to fill in the Graphic Organizer.



The Five Steps Overview – Example 1

SpongeBob Example

1

Let's take the steps from Brainstorming and apply them to SpongeBob. What words come to mind when you see SpongeBob? Write a bunch of them down. Like this:

Happy	Naïve	Friendly
Optimistic	Strange	Yellow
Square	Nerdy	Annoying
Adventures	Clumsy	"I'm Ready"
Driving Tests	Mr. Krabbs	Patrick/Gary
Bikini Bottom	Squidward	Jellyfishing



2

Scavenger Hunt / Search for Clues: Now go back to your text and look for a few clues that match up with your Theme.

How is SpongeBob adventuresome?

He enjoys jellyfishing even though he is often stung by the jellyfish.

He walks around saying, "I'm ready. I'm ready." All the time.

How is he optimistic?

He is nice to neighbors even when they're mean to him, like Squidward.

He keeps taking driving tests even though he keeps failing them over and over.

How is SpongeBob happy?

You usually see SpongeBob with a smile on his face. He also laughs a lot.

3

Brainstorm the pattern: Next look at these words to see if you can identify a pattern of any sort. How do the words fit together?

There are a lot of good concepts we came up with to start.

What I need are a couple I can use, especially if they connect to each other.

I am going to pick adventuresome and optimistic and happy, since they all seem to go together. You could always pick other words, but I thought of some good evidence for these.

The 5 Steps Example 1 – page 2

Example 1

4

Write a Theme Statement: From the words that fit together, write a sentence about the character or the text.

SpongeBob always seems to be happy and optimistic, going on adventures, no matter what goes wrong in his life or if people are mean or if he gets stung or even fails his tests over and over.

This sentence is a start, but it's just about SpongeBob. I need to take this sentence and shape it into a statement about life in general, saying something about life or the world that is larger than the one character or text – so something bigger than SpongeBob. Like this:

Happiness depends on being optimistic and facing life as an adventure, no matter how often things may go wrong.

5

Chart it: Make life easier for yourself by clearly writing down the WHAT, HOW, and WHY you have chosen so you can refer to them later as you write and revise your essay.

WHAT: *optimistic, happy, adventuresome (no matter what)*

HOW 1: *driving tests, jellyfishing even though he gets stung*

HOW 2: *“I’m ready,” smiles and laughs, kind to grumpy neighbors/boss*

WHY: *“Happiness depends on being optimistic and facing life as an adventure, no matter how often things may go wrong.”*

You see that I have broken out the HOW into HOW 1 and HOW 2. This whole process will help me organize my paper better when I move on to writing a **Thesis Statement**, and then writing the **Topic Sentences** for my paragraphs, and finally working up the **Last Sentences** to those paragraphs and the **Conclusion** to my paper. (Bold words have their own sections in workbook.)

**Remember: These 5 steps leads to your Thesis Statement
which is the map for the rest of your paper or essay!**

Brainstorming Chart – Example 1

Here is what the chart would look like when filling in the information we have brainstormed for SpongeBob. (Note that the Thesis Statement at the bottom will be explained in the next handout.)

WHAT	Write in here the concepts you brainstormed that you want to use in the essay.	<i>Optimistic Adventurous</i>	<i>Friendly Neighborly</i>	<i>Happiness</i>
HOWs	<p>Write down 4-8 examples from your text you could use easily/quickly to explain the concept words in the WHAT.</p> <p>It helps to group these up so you can have more than 1 example of a few different concept words under WHAT.</p>	<p><i>Jellyfishing is his hobby even though he gets stung</i></p> <p><i>He keeps trying to pass his driving test though he always fails, spectacularly</i></p> <p><i>He is kind to neighbors even when they are not good to him, smiles and laughs a lot of the time</i></p> <p><i>He walks around saying, "I'm ready" all the time</i></p>		
WHY	Using the WHAT words with the best examples/evidence, describe a universal idea you have discovered in the text. Write a complete sentence.	<i>"Happiness depends on being optimistic and facing life as an adventure, no matter how often things may go wrong."</i>		
THESIS STATEMENT	<p>In the [genre] [Title] by [Author's full name], the author [verbs*] [WHAT]. Through the use of [HOW 1], and [HOW 2], the author [verbs*] [WHY].</p>	<p><i>In SpongeBob Squarepants a cartoon series on Cartoon Network, the author introduces us to a very happy fellow who is optimistic and enjoys each new adventure in life. Through the use of the motif of adventure in failing his many driving tests and the metaphor of jellyfishing, as well as being always ready to show kindness to his grumpy neighbor, the author reveals how one's happiness is conditioned by a sense of optimism and adventure, no matter how many difficulties and unexpected challenges one may encounter in life.</i></p>		
	<p>How do you do this? See the next section of this workbook.</p>			

Writing a Thesis Statement

The most important sentence in your essay is not necessarily the first or the last. The key sentence in your essay is always the Thesis Statement. For a short essay, the Thesis may be the only sentence in your first paragraph. What is this all about? How do you write one? Well, until you become a really skilled author, you can rely on filling in the following model every time you need a Thesis Statement. Look below. On the left hand side is one model to use. On the right hand side we are filling in the WHAT and HOWs and WHY from our example, then playing with the words a little to make them flow /sound better. Another model you can use appears at the bottom of the page, and is equally good as an alternative.

Here are the parts of a Thesis Model:

Here is an example of a Thesis Statement:

MODEL	EXAMPLE
<i>In this passage from [Title],</i>	In <i>SpongeBob Squarepants</i>,
<i>a [type of text – play, poem, novel],</i>	a cartoon series
<i>by [Full name of author],</i>	by Cartoon Network,
<i>the author [strong verb -- see below]</i>	the author introduces us to
<i>[WHAT you will argue – the concepts].</i>	a very happy fellow who is optimistic and enjoys each new adventure in life.
<i>Through the use of [HOW you will prove it – best to name some Literary Devices]</i>	Through the use of the motif of adventure in failing his many driving tests and the metaphor of jellyfishing, as well as always being ready to show kindness to his grumpy neighbor and demanding boss,
<i>the author reveals [WHY this matters – the theme statement you've written].</i>	the author reveals how one's happiness is conditioned by a sense of optimism and adventure, no matter how many difficulties and unexpected challenges one may encounter in life.

Alternate Model – another version of the Thesis Statement is:

In the [genre] [Title] by [Author's full name], the author [verbs] [WHAT]. Through the use of [HOW 1], and [HOW 2], the author [verbs*] [WHY].*

Thesis Statements – page 2

Thesis

Adding Literary Devices

One of the changes to the WHAT/HOW/WHY Brainstorming Chart made when writing the Thesis Statement above was to name the Literary Devices in the evidence we had chosen. This becomes easier the more you read and write, as you will begin to look for Literary Devices while you read. These devices are the clues the author leaves behind to help the reader uncover the author's true message. So, when you see one, you can highlight the device and save it, and then use it later when you need a clue to the author's theme (as your evidence). To start with you can generally rely on finding one or more of the following basic devices to use.

Top 10 List of Literary Devices

Metaphor or Simile	When the author compares two things
Motif	When the author repeats an image, phrase, or idea
Imagery	The use of words that appeal to the 5 senses (sight, touch)
Irony	When words or situations do not match (verbal irony = sarcasm)
Repetition	When a phrase or pattern is repeated (similar to motif)
Diction	The specific choice of words by the author
Allusion	When the author makes reference to something else
Rhetorical Question	A question asked when no answer is expected or wanted
Antithesis	When opposites are placed next to each other for emphasis/contrast

Filling in the Model

Once you have filled in the Model, type out the Thesis Statement into your essay/paper. To make things easier to see in the next part of writing the essay, the Thesis Statement here will be color coded with the **WHAT** in green, the **HOWS** in Blue and the **WHY** in purple. Also we have placed **Transitions and Introductions** in Yellow. **HINT:** Insert Transitions to help the reader understand the context of your Thesis. Here is the color-coded version of our Thesis Statement:

In SpongeBob Squarepants, a cartoon series by Cartoon Network, the author introduces us to a very happy fellow who is optimistic and enjoys each new adventure in life. Through the use of the motif of adventure in failing his driving tests and the metaphor of jellyfishing, as well as always being ready to show kindness especially to his grumpy neighbor and his demanding boss, the author reveals how one's happiness is conditioned by a sense of optimism and adventure, no matter how many difficulties and unexpected challenges one may encounter in life.

Reading the Map

From Thesis Statement to Essay

To Recap:

Once you have come up with your **WHAT** and a couple of **HOW's** and a **WHY** you are ready to dive into your essay. You have the pieces you need to organize the rest of the essay. What you do next is to write what you will claim or prove in your essay, in what is called a **Thesis Statement**. The Thesis Statement is also known as an Assertion, which is summed up in your **WHY**. You write it as a sentence that states a big idea.

NOTE: Some teachers talk about APEC's – a way of describing a one-paragraph style essay.

A	Assertion	a sentence stating what you will prove
P	Proof	the evidence you show to prove the Assertion
E	Explanation	explanation of exactly how this evidence proves your point
C	Connection	why your point matters, or how it connects to the world

For longer essays, a Thesis Statement is an Assertion that can be your first paragraph all by itself. Or the Thesis Statement may be the main part of your opening paragraph, if you add an Introduction, called a Hook, before the Thesis Statement. (More on this later in the workbook.)

Until you become a pro at this, you are welcome to use the following model to construct your Thesis. After writing more of these essays, you can start to get creative with the model, but until then, it's fine if your Thesis Statement looks like everyone else's. Your teacher will simply be glad you have one. And once you have this, then you will have the map to the rest of your essay. But first, here is the model you can use:

In the [genre] [Title] by [Author's full name], the author [verbs] [WHAT].
Through the use of [HOW 1], and [HOW 2], the author [verbs*] [WHY].*

What are these things?

- **A genre** is a type of text – a novel or play, a TV show or movie, a poem or ... a cartoon.
- **The title** can be shown in one of two ways: for longer works like a book, newspaper, or website, the title is put in italics. For shorter works, like a poem, play, article in a website or paper, or a chapter in a book, the title is placed in “quotation marks.”
- Use the **author's full name** in the Thesis; after this simply use the author's last name.
- For a list of **active verbs**, please see the list provided in a previous worksheet.

Thesis Statements and Road Maps – page 2

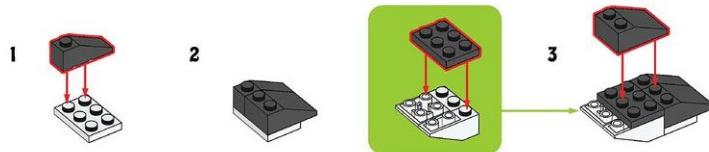
Later, you will find a Visual Outline for an essay – which could be anywhere from 1 page to 5 pages long. The chart below offers you a Visual Outline for what happens in an essay, based on knowing the following things:

WHAT HOW 1 HOW 2 WHY THESIS

So, what comes next?

Think of putting your essay together as if you were **building an argument in court**, where you tell everyone whether someone is guilty or not guilty, and then explain the evidence you will use to prove your claim.

That means when you present your evidence you don't just show the jury (reader) a knife with blood on it. You show them the knife and describe where it was found and whose fingerprints are on it and why it proves that your client is not guilty. When you quote a text you do the same thing – you present the evidence (the HOW's you have already chosen) and then explain how this evidence proves your claim (that WHY you wrote when you were brainstorming your answer for the essay).



The Road Map

Once you have your Thesis Statement you have a map to the rest of your paper. Get the WHAT / HOW / WHY figured out at the start, and the rest of what you need to write is a simple case of filling in blanks and writing complete sentences. Skip this step and you won't know what to put where, and may end up staring at a blank screen for a long time.

Or think of writing an essay like **building with Legos**. There are many pieces, and the pieces all snap together in their right places. When you write an essay you can snap together the WHAT and HOW's and WHY in different combinations to create your answer. The Outline below gives you some basic instructions for combining the pieces. More detailed explanations for each step follow the Visual Outline.

Thesis Statements and Road Maps – page 3

Paragraph 1 Introduction/Hook (1-2 sentences – more on this later)
Thesis Statement **[WHAT/HOW/WHY]**

Paragraph 2 Topic Sentence **[WHAT and HOW 1]**

Hug evidence from text by giving context or plot clues **[HOW 1]**
Introduce speaker and add Quote 1 (add in-line citation after the quote)
Hug evidence by explaining why this quote matters to the original text
Hug evidence by explaining why this quote matters in proving the Thesis
Transition phrase
Hug second piece of evidence giving context or plot clues **[HOW 1]**
Introduce speaker and add Quote 1 (add in-line citation after the quote)
Hug evidence by explaining why this quote matters to the original text
Hug evidence by explaining why this quote matters in proving your Thesis
Last Sentence **[HOW 1 and WHY]**

Paragraph 3 Transition phrase, Topic Sentence **[WHAT and HOW 2]**

Repeat process from Paragraph 2 above **[using HOW 2]**
Last Sentence **[HOW 2 and WHY]**

USE Paragraph 4 Topic Sentence

Make a Global Connection (Text to Text / Text to World)
Hug evidence from outside source by giving speaker/context of a quote
Quote 1 (with an in-line citation at end of quote)
Hug evidence by explaining why this quote supports the Thesis **[WHY]**

OR Paragraph 4 Topic Sentence **[Connect the WHAT and another text]**

Compare this second text to the first – share similarities between them
Contrast the two texts – what is different about the two
Summarize how the second text supports your Thesis **[WHY]**

Paragraph 5 Conclusion Topic Sentence (Never starts with “In conclusion!”)

Remind how you have given evidence to prove your Thesis **[summarize HOW's]**
Offer a Counter Argument (“Now some may claim that ..., but ...”)
Finish by restating – not repeating – your Thesis **[whole WHAT/HOW/WHY]**
Add a ReHook to connect back to how you started (The 1st sentence above)

Topic Sentences

From Thesis Statement to Paper Outline

Here comes the reason you spent time on your Thesis Statement! Once you have it written you are cleared to take off on writing your other paragraphs. You'll start the next two paragraphs with Topic Sentences drawn straight from your WHAT and HOWs.

1. Each Paragraph starts with a Topic Sentence.
2. The Topic Sentence shows your reader what you will discuss in the rest of the following paragraph.
3. To make a Topic Sentence just use your WHAT and a HOW.
4. Repeat for the next paragraph with the WHAT and the other HOW.

Start with the Thesis Statement. Remember how this is structured:

You started by identifying your text and your author (INTRO)
You used two of your Concept words (WHAT) for an overview
Then you described the kinds of evidence you will use (HOW)
You finished by explaining the point you want to make (WHY)

In SpongeBob Squarepants, a cartoon series by Cartoon Network, the author introduces us to a very happy fellow who is optimistic and enjoys each new adventure in life. Through the use of the motif of adventure in failing his many driving tests and the metaphor of jellyfishing, as well as always being ready to show kindness especially to his grumpy neighbor and his demanding boss, the author reveals how one's happiness is conditioned by a sense of optimism and adventure, no matter how many difficulties and unexpected challenges one may encounter in life.

The WHAT (in green) is where you have said that SpongeBob is a happy fellow, who likes adventures and is optimistic.

The 1st How (in blue) motif of adventure in driving tests and the metaphor of jellyfishing

The 2nd HOW (in blue) his kindness to neighbor/boss (and will include the repetition of the motto, "I'm ready.")

Topic Sentences are built from connecting the parts of your Thesis Statement.

BTW: so are the final sentences of each of your two body paragraphs!

Topic Sentences – page 2

Creating Topic Sentences

To create your Topic Sentences you need to combine WHAT/HOW/WHY. For example, in Paragraph 2 you will prove your assertion (the WHY in the Thesis Statement) by giving evidence from the text using quotes that support your first idea – that SpongeBob lives adventurously whether taking driving tests or jellyfishing. Then, in Paragraph 3, you will prove your point (the WHY) by using evidence and quotes that show how SpongeBob is always “ready” to show kindness to others. Here you can refer to how nicely SpongeBob treats both Squidward, the grumpy neighbor, and Mr. Krabbs as the demanding boss.

Topic Sentence Paragraph 2

In the SpongeBob Squarepants cartoons, the main character remains happy and seems very optimistic about his chances of passing the driver's test which he always fails, and the joy of jellyfishing, even though he often gets stung badly while on these adventures.

Topic Sentence for Paragraph 3 uses the same process, WHAT, but with the second HOW:

In addition, SpongeBob's optimism is seen as he happily goes about his daily life, clearly repeating his motto, “I'm ready,” and greeting others with kindness no matter how they treat him.

TIP: You will notice the words at the start of each of these Topic Sentences uses some form of introduction, or transition phrase, to tie this paragraph to the ones before it. See below for more on how to use Transition words.

PREVIEW: Last Sentences in Paragraphs 2 and 3

The final sentences in each of these paragraphs are also simple because they too use this model. However, instead of using WHAT and HOW, the last sentences use the HOW you have included in your paragraph and connect back to the WHY in the Thesis Statement.

This mean that having a Thesis Statement means you already have everything you need to write the first and last sentences in each of your body paragraphs!

Look at the Visual Outline to see how this all works

Hugging Evidence

Filling in Your Paragraphs

The main portion of writing your essay is where you show the evidence you have found in the text, using quotes to prove your Assertion (WHY) made in the Thesis Statement. How do you add quotes? All you need to do is learn how to hug a quote. And then do it again. And again. Before worrying about the mysterious 4th Paragraph or the Conclusion, your essay will look like this:

Hugging Evidence

General Outline

	Title
Paragraph 1	Hook (1-2 sentences) Thesis Statement (2 Sentences – follow the model)
Paragraph 2	Topic Sentence 1 (WHAT & HOW 1) Hug 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transition & Intro (when/where the evidence is in the text)• Who is speaking, “Quote” (Citation)• Explanation of why the author used this quote in the text• Explanation of why this quote supports or proves the Assertion Hug 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transition & Intro (when/where the evidence is in the text)• Who is speaking, “Quote” (Citation)• Explanation of why the author used this quote in the text• Explanation of why this quote supports or proves the Assertion Last Sentence (HOW 1 & WHY)
Paragraph 3	Topic Sentence 2 (WHAT & HOW 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hug in two quotes supporting the Thesis (Assertion/WHY), repeating the same Hugging process outlined above Last Sentence (HOW 2 & WHY)

Once you have decided what you are going to say about your topic, you'll need to be clear what kind of evidence you will use – these are things we brainstormed when filling in charts and deciding HOW to support the big ideas about the text/character/theme.

Hugging Evidence – page 2

OK, so now you know how Paragraph 2 starts. You'll find out more about how each paragraph ends using a model that combines HOW and WHY. With both the first and last sentences, you now have the top and bottom slices of bread for your sandwich. It is now time to add all the good stuff in between, which is the evidence of your Thesis (WHY).

Paragraph 2 Example

Paragraph 2 started with this Topic Sentence, which came from the Thesis Statement back in the first paragraph. **HINT:** Since you will need to keep your WHAT / HOW /WHY handy to fill in the rest of the paper, it may help to have these words on a little chart near you as you keep writing. **Remember** the **WHAT** is in green and the **HOW** is in blue.

In the SpongeBob Squarepants cartoons, the main character remains happy and seems very optimistic about his chances of passing the driver's test which he always fails, and the joy of jellyfishing, even though he often gets stung badly while on these adventures.

To HUG in your evidence, using the pattern for adding either your main points or your quotes from the text as follows:

1. Transition / Introduce the context of the quote (when/where it comes in the text)
2. Introduce the speaker (who) and add a “Quote” (or give the example from the text)
Add a (Citation) at the end of the quote, followed by the period
3. Explain why the author uses the quote/example in the text
4. Explain why this quote/example supports your Thesis Statement (Assertion/WHY)

Each hugged quote usually requires 4 sentences. Here is an example of hugging a quote into a paragraph for the SpongeBob response:

In the SpongeBob Squarepants cartoons, the main character remains happy and seems very optimistic about his chances of passing the driver's test which he always fails, and the joy of jellyfishing, even though he often gets stung badly while on these adventures. In one episode we watch as SpongeBob arrives to meet Mrs. Puff, the Driving Instructor. Although she is not enthusiastic about seeing SpongeBob, she climbs into his boat for the test. SpongeBob seems very happy throughout the test, even thinking he might pass, though he crashes the boat into pedestrians, signs, and many other boats. The show's author is making fun of how naïve SpongeBob is to think he could pass this test, even though he has never passed a test before. In this way, the author demonstrates how important it is in life to keep trying to accomplish our goals no matter how often we fail to live up to expectations.

When you HUG in your evidence like this, you are showing what in the text leads you to believe what you said in your Topic Sentence. **And all of this comes from your Brainstorming Charts.**

Hugging Evidence – page 3

Why 2 Explanations for a Hug?

NOTE: You need both sentences after your example/evidence/quote – the first sentence explains why the author added this event or quote to the text. The second sentence explains why you think this evidence is important and helps you prove your assertion. If you simply drop in a quote without explaining why the quote matters, it's like showing a gun to a jury but not explaining how the gun proves anything about the person on trial. Always explain why your evidence matters by connecting it to your WHY in the Thesis!

OK but why 2 Quotes/Hugs?

So, are you done yet? Nope. **Better reflections employ two quotes from the text** or two examples of evidence for each paragraph. That means we now need to hug in another example of how SpongeBob is optimistic. Going back to our WHAT/HOW/WHY charts we see there is more about being adventurous there, dealing with his love of jellyfishing.

In many other episodes, SpongeBob enjoys his hobby of jellyfishing, always optimistic that he will have a lot of fun visiting the jellyfish. Armed with his net and accompanied by his friend Patrick, SpongeBob seems to forget how often the jellyfish have in the past not understood his intentions and have stung him. Again, the author shows us just how clueless SpongeBob seems to be, or else, how SpongeBob chooses not to think about the risks and painful stings he might receive. Looking beyond the challenges and risks in life, SpongeBob teaches us how important it is to have a positive outlook, especially since life is not always easy or painless.

Paragraph 3 Example

Paragraph 3 works to connect a different HOW with the WHAT and WHY of the Thesis Statement. This means you have the chance to focus on two different examples from the text for quotes. Even so, the process is the same.

Hugging Quotes Model

1. Transition / Introduce the context of the quote (when/where it comes in the text)
2. Introduce the speaker (who) and add a “Quote” (or give the example from the text)
Add a (Citation) at the end of the quote, followed by the period
3. Explain why the author uses the quote/example in the text
4. Explain why this quote/example supports your Thesis Statement (Assertion/WHY)

Last Sentences

Connecting Your Paragraphs to the Thesis

Remember: everything in your essay works to prove your Assertion (WHY) to your Reader. So far, your paragraphs have organized your thoughts and shown the reader some evidence. Now it is time to tell your reader why this evidence matters to your Thesis.

Never end a paragraph without connecting back to your Assertion (WHY).

You started the paragraph connecting the WHAT to your HOW. Now finish the paragraph by completing the circle and connecting your HOW and WHY.

The Last Sentence in your paragraph connects the HOW and your WHY. You sum up the ways the evidence you have shown (HOW) explains the position you are taking (WHY). Just to recap how we get this last sentence started, in your Thesis Statement you had the following pieces:

WHAT: *the author introduces us to a very happy fellow who is optimistic and enjoys each new adventure in life.*

HOW 1: *Through the motif of adventure in failing his driving tests and the metaphor of jellyfishing*

HOW 2: *as well as always being ready to show kindness especially to his grumpy neighbor and his difficult boss*

WHY: *the author reveals how one's happiness depends on being optimistic and facing life as an adventure, no matter how often things go wrong.*

So, a final sentence in this paragraph could look something like this:

By showing how SpongeBob is optimistic about jellyfishing or passing his driving test, and how he disregards the challenges and pain involved in his failures, the author displays how being happy depends on just this kind of optimism and a spirit of adventure in life.

Notice how the final sentence does not simply repeat the Thesis word for word. Instead, this sentence keeps the same ideas but does more than simply repeats it. This is very important!

HINT: Never repeat the Thesis statement word for word in any paragraph. Instead, say the same thing only “better” or by adding more detail, depth or definition to the WHY at the end of the paragraph. How? Look at the evidence you have given in the paragraph for help in adding this depth.

Last Sentences – page 2

Here, finally, is the whole of Paragraph 2 from the essay:

In the SpongeBob Squarepants cartoons, the main character remains happy and seems very optimistic about his chance of passing the driver's test which he always fails, and the joy of jellyfishing, even though he often gets stung badly while on these adventures. In one episode we watch as SpongeBob arrives to meet Mrs. Puff, the Driving Instructor. Although she is not enthusiastic about seeing SpongeBob, she climbs into his boat for the test. SpongeBob seems very happy throughout the test, even thinking he might pass, though he crashes the boat into pedestrians, signs, and many other boats. The show's author is making fun of how naïve SpongeBob is to think he could pass this test, even though he has never passed a test before. In this way, the author demonstrates how important it is in life to keep trying to accomplish our goals no matter how often we fail to live up to expectations. In many other episodes, SpongeBob enjoys his hobby of jellyfishing, always optimistic that he will have a lot of fun visiting the jellyfish. Armed with his net and accompanied by his friend Patrick, SpongeBob seems to forget how often the jellyfish have in the past not understood his intentions and have stung him. Again, the author shows us just how clueless SpongeBob seems to be, or else, how he chooses not to think about the risks and painful stings he might receive. Looking beyond the challenges and risks in life, SpongeBob teaches us how important it is to have a positive outlook, especially since life is not always easy or painless. By showing how SpongeBob is optimistic about jellyfishing or passing his driving test and how he disregards the challenges and pain involved in his failures, the author shows how being happy depends on just this kind of optimism and spirit of adventure in life.

Since Paragraph 3 uses a different HOW and a new Topic Sentence, the last sentence will be a combination of this second HOW, and yet the same WHY.

Topic Sentence:

In addition, SpongeBob optimism is seen as he happily goes about his daily life, whether he is getting ready for work, off to meet a friend, or on his way to yet another daily adventure.

Last Sentence: (Depends on what evidence you show, but may be something like this)
SpongeBob's attitude of being ready for anything teaches us all to find happiness no matter what may happen or who we may have to put up with.

Visual Outline 1: Outline for Paragraph 2

SpongeBob Example

Here is the Paragraph we have written for the example in chart form so you can identify all the parts. Now, if you can see the parts, and how they snap together, maybe you can write your own. **Using these charts may be helpful the first few times you write longer essays, but the goal is to get accustomed to the process so you can write paragraphs with nicely hugged quotes, without filling in the chart first.**

Topic Sentence	Add a Transition Phrase	<i>In the SpongeBob Squarepants cartoons,</i>
	Connect the WHAT and HOW you will be using for this paragraph	<i>the main character remains happy and seems very optimistic about his chance of passing the driver's test which he always fails, and the joy of jellyfishing, even though he often gets stung badly while on these adventures.</i>

Hug 1	Perhaps use a Transition	<i>In one episode</i>
	Sentence 1: Give context when and where in the text the quote or evidence comes	<i>we watch as SpongeBob arrives to meet Mrs. Puff, the Driving Instructor. Although she is not enthusiastic about seeing SpongeBob, she climbs into his boat for the test.</i>
	Sentence 2: Say who is speaking (for quotes only)	
	“Quote” (Citation) OR Evidence from the text	<i>SpongeBob seems very happy throughout the test, even thinking he might pass, though he crashes the boat into pedestrians, signs, and many other boats.</i>
	Sentence 3: Explain why the quote matters in the text	<i>The show's author is making fun of how naïve SpongeBob is to think he could pass this test, even though he has never passed a test before.</i>
	Sentence 4: Explain why the quote matters to your Thesis/Assertion (WHY)	<i>In this way, the author demonstrates how important it is in life to keep trying to accomplish our goals no matter how often we fail to live up to expectations.</i>

Visual Outline of Paragraph 2 – Page 2

Hug 2	Add a Transition Phrase	<i>In many other episodes,</i>
	Sentence 1: Give context when and where in the text the quote or evidence comes	<i>SpongeBob enjoys his hobby of jellyfishing, always optimistic that he will have a lot of fun visiting the jellyfish.</i>
	Sentence 2: Say who is speaking (for quotes only)	
	“Quote” (Citation) OR Evidence from the text	<i>Armed with his net and accompanied by his friend Patrick, SpongeBob seems to forget how often the jellyfish have in the past not understood his intentions and have stung him.</i>
	Sentence 3: Explain why the quote matters in the text	<i>Again, the author shows us just how clueless SpongeBob seems to be, or else, how he chooses not to think about the risks and painful stings he might receive.</i>
	Sentence 4: Explain why the quote matters to your Thesis/Assertion (WHY)	<i>Looking beyond the challenges and risks in life, SpongeBob teaches us how important it is to have a positive outlook, especially since life is not always easy or painless.</i>

Last Sentence	Start with a Transition	
	Sum up the evidence and show how it supports your Assertion in the Thesis – use HOW’s to show WHY	<i>By showing how SpongeBob is optimistic about jellyfishing or passing his driving test and how he disregards the challenges and pain involved in his failures, the author shows how being happy depends on just this kind of optimism and spirit of adventure in life.</i>

Blank charts are provided at the end of this workbook for you to use if you choose. However, no one HAS to use this system. It's a tool that might help you.

Paragraph / Hugging Chart

Directions: To complete a Body Paragraph you can start with your Topic Sentence and Last Sentence. Knowing where you are starting and ending helps you decide the best way to add the evidence in between. And remember that these two sentences are built from the WHAT and HOW for the Topic Sentence, and the HOW and WHY for the Last Sentence.

Start by remembering your WHAT / HOWs / WHY. Then fill in these two sentences before turning the chart over to work on Hugging in your Evidence.

Topic Sentence	Add a Transition Phrase	
	Connect the WHAT and HOW you will be using for this paragraph	

Last Sentence	Start with a Transition	
	Sum up the evidence and show how it supports your Assertion in the Thesis – use HOW's to show WHY	

To Complete: Copy and paste all of your sentences from this chart onto your MLA Template in paragraph form. Once you have done this a few times, you will no longer need to use the chart. It will all become second nature to you!

Paragraph / Hugging Charts – Page 2

Hug 1	Perhaps use a Transition	
	Sentence 1: Give context when and where in the text the quote or evidence comes	
	Sentence 2: Say who is speaking (for quotes only)	
	“Quote” (Citation) OR Evidence from the text	
	Sentence 3: Explain why the quote matters in the text	
	Sentence 4: Explain why the quote matters to your Thesis/Assertion (WHY)	
Hug 2	Add a Transition Phrase	
	Sentence 1: Give context when and where in the text the quote or evidence comes	
	Sentence 2: Say who is speaking (for quotes only)	
	“Quote” (Citation) OR Evidence from the text	
	Sentence 3: Explain why the quote matters in the text	
	Sentence 4: Explain why the quote matters to your Thesis/Assertion (WHY)	

Visual Outline 2: Outline for Whole Essay

SpongeBob Example

Start by opening your MLA Template

Every time you are asked to write, you start by opening up your handy MLA Template. This is the document you created at the start of the year with your name on it in the top left hand corner. Once you have created this document and saved it, you can reuse it over and over throughout the year. Just open your copy, and then make a new copy. Name your new copy with your last name and the title of the assignment. Change the date, teacher's name and period as necessary; change the Title at the top of page 1. Then start typing over the text that is already there and you'll keep the proper formatting. Here is a reminder of what the TEMPLATE looks like:

Victor Lopez
English 10 (Period 3)
Mr. Schellenberg
April 12, 2020

Title of Paper

Your Template needs to be written with double spaced lines here, with 1 inch margins, using Times New Roman script that is size 12.

Remember that the first line of each paragraph needs to be indented – and you do not add extra spaces between the paragraphs, even though that does make a paper look better. You can set up both Google Docs and WORD to make this indent for you automatically.

You may also want to remember to “turn on the blue lines” which means to tell your computer to spell check for you automatically. If you need help knowing how to do this, Mr. S. has a handy “How to” video that shows you what to do.

Visual Outline – page 2

<p>Paragraph 1: Start with a Thesis Statement:</p> <p>You start by identifying your text/author (INTRO) Using your Concept words (WHAT) give an overview. Then describe the kinds of evidence you will use (HOW). Finish by explaining the point you want to make (WHY).</p>	<p>Model: <i>In the [genre] [Title] by [Author], the author [verbs] [WHAT]. Through [HOW1] and [HOW2] the author [verbs] [WHY].</i></p> <p>SpongeBob Example:</p> <p><i>In SpongeBob Squarepants, a cartoon series on Cartoon Network, the author introduces us to a very happy fellow who is optimistic and enjoys each new adventure in life. Through the use of the motif of adventure in failing his many driving tests and the metaphor of jellyfishing, as well as his kindness especially to his grumpy neighbor and his demanding boss, the author reveals how one's happiness is conditioned by a sense of optimism and adventure, no matter how many difficulties and unexpected challenges one may encounter in life.</i></p>
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<p>Paragraph 2 Topic Sentence</p> <p>Body of Paragraph 2</p> <p>Concluding Sentence</p> <hr/>	<p>Paragraph 2 is about your first HOW. The Topic Sentence for this paragraph is your WHAT and HOW1. <i>In the SpongeBob Squarepants cartoons, the main character remains happy and seems very optimistic about his chances of passing the driver's test which he always fails, and the joy of jellyfishing, even though he often gets stung badly while on these adventures.</i></p> <p>In between your Topic Sentence and last sentence you hug in evidence from your text. More on this later.</p> <p>The last sentence for this paragraph is HOW1 and the WHY. You connect what you have given as proof with WHY all this matters.</p>
<p>Paragraph 3 Topic Sentence</p> <p>Body of Paragraph 3</p> <p>Concluding Sentence</p>	<p>Paragraph 3 is about your second HOW. The Topic Sentence for this paragraph is your WHAT and HOW2. <i>In addition, SpongeBob optimism is seen as he happily goes about his daily life, whether he is getting ready for work, off to meet a friend, or on his way to yet another daily adventure.</i></p> <p>In between your Topic Sentence and last sentence you hug in evidence from your text. More on this later.</p> <p>Again, the last sentence connects HOW2 and the WHY. You connect what you have given as proof in this paragraph with WHY.</p>

Visual Outline – page 3

Paragraph 4 comes in three flavors. There is the academic version and there are a couple of IB specific versions – one where you connect your text to a Global Issue, and the other where you compare and contrast this text with another text. In the academic version, you add a paragraph with support from research – meaning you add some more evidence from other sources (books or websites) that help support the case you were making in paragraphs 2 and 3. We'll look at each of these later.

Paragraph 5 is your **Conclusion**. You start with a transition other than “In conclusion” and then state how you have shown your **WHAT** by using both **HOW1** and **HOW2** from the **Thesis**.

You may want to add a Counter-Argument, which is what someone might say against your proof. But you can then simply finish by saying you have proven your WHY well enough. Regardless of whether you add a Counter-Argument or not, if you have added a **Hook** to the start of the first paragraph, end by connecting back to the **Hook** in some way.

<p>Paragraph 5:</p> <p><i>For more detail on Paragraph 5, see the section of the workbook on Conclusions</i></p> <p>SpongeBob Example:</p>	<p>Transition phrase Topic Sentence Summary Counter-Argument Rebuttal Restatement</p> <p>But never “In Conclusion” Explain your Thesis Statement (new words) Describe the HOW's used to prove your WHY Bring up a contrary position to yours Explain why the Counter is wrong Restate why your assertion is a better idea</p> <p><i>As I have shown, the author is trying to teach us how to experience a greater sense of happiness in life. Through the use of the motif of taking driver's tests over and over, and the metaphor of jellyfishing where SpongeBob may be stung but still enjoys himself, as well as the naïve optimism of greeting the day and your grumpy neighbors with a smile and the words, “I'm ready,” the author has demonstrated how important it is to have an optimistic attitude. Some may say that SpongeBob is naïve and unrealistic. But more of us might agree with the authors that happiness depends on being optimistic and taking life as an adventure, no matter what troubles may come. Happiness, it seems, depends on being optimistic and taking life as an adventure no matter what troubles may come along.</i></p>
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Visual Outline – page 4

Transitions

One of the hints for making your essay flow smoothly is to use Transition words to connect one part of a paragraph to another, and to connect each paragraph to the other. Again, think of writing your essay like building with Legos. Each of your sentences is like a different colored Lego brick. But to make them snap together you need a way to connect them to one another, rather than let them just sit in a pile.

These connectors are Transitions.

And there are different kinds of Transitions, for use in different ways at different times, depending on what types of sentences you are trying to connect to each other. For example (that's a transition right there), you may want to give an example of what you are talking about. Or, (that's another transition) you may want to contrast what you are saying with what you said before. Finally, (yes, that's another transition word) you may want to conclude your ideas.



TIP: When adding transitions, they most often come at the start of a sentence and are followed by a comma.

So, here again is your handy list of transitions to use whenever you want to build a stronger essay. First, decide what you need to say. Then, grab a good (new) Transition from the chart (not one you have used already). Next, add your comma and then, keep writing.

Addition	Timing	Illustration	Compare/Contrast	Cause/Effect
First (of all)	Before	For example	As, Like	Therefore, Thus
Second, Third ...	Previously	For instance	Just as, As with	Certainly
Also, Besides	Now	Such as	Whereas, Likewise	Consequently
In addition	Immediately	Including	In the same way	So, And so
Furthermore	Then	To be specific	Similarly	As a result
And, Further	Following	Specifically	But, Yet, Apart from	For this reason
Another, Again	Later	To illustrate	Instead, However	Since, Because
Again, Next	During	In other words	Although	If ... then
Moreover, Then	After	One instance	In comparison	Accordingly
Last, Finally	While	So, Thus	Still, Despite this	Due to
Subsequently	Eventually	In the case of	Even though	Leading to

The Mysterious (But Fun) Paragraph 4

You've Got Choices Here

Paragraph 4

Maybe you won't need one. If you do, no doubt your teacher will tell you what kind to add to your essay. If you do get a chance to write one, here is where you can have some real fun with your essay, showing off your creativity, or giving the teacher an example of your research skills, or going completely crazy by comparing your main ideas to a second text of your own choosing. So which is it? And How?

Above in the General Outline of the essay, you saw the following entry for Paragraph 4:

USE Paragraph 4 Topic Sentence

Make a Global Connection (Text to Text / Text to World)

Hug evidence from outside source by giving speaker/context of a quote

Quote 1 (with an in-line citation at end of quote)

Hug evidence by explaining why this quote supports the Thesis **[WHY]**

OR Paragraph 4 Topic Sentence **[Connect the WHAT and another text]**

Compare this second text to the first – share similarities between them

Contrast the two texts – what is different about the two

Summarize how the second text supports your Thesis **[WHY]**

Global Connections

Global Connections are a skill needed in IB classes. You'll find out more about this later. For now recognize that in IB classes you are to focus your Thesis on some issue that is a Global Concern, and you are to use two texts to support your Assertion (WHY).

Outside Sources

Another common academic element of an essay is to bring in quotes from one or two outside sources which will support your Assertion (WHY). These can be interviews with experts, books, articles from newspapers, journals, or websites. By bringing in other sources you show that (1) you have done some research, (2) other people with some form of authority/knowledge agree with your Thesis, and (3) you may be able to add some greater depth to your initial Thesis which will help you write a better Conclusion. (See the Conclusions pages that follow for why you need to deepen your Thesis and not just restate it word for word from Paragraph 1.)

The Mysterious Paragraph 4 – page 2

Academic Paragraph 4

Here is where you can do some research into your topic and add something more to your essay. You could research Happiness or Optimism, or search for some interviews with the author/creators of the cartoons. You could look for articles or interviews with child psychologists about the effect of cartoons on children. Find a quote or two that you can hug into your Paragraph 4 and you will have accomplished this:

- (1) **You will impress your teacher!** Every college student has had to do this research thingy and if you show your skills doing it now, your teacher will be really impressed.
- (2) **Someone else's words will make your words better.** Adding something from another source will support your proof and make it easier for your reader to agree with you and even think you know a lot more about the subject than you do. That's why you add research from other authorities. They can make you sound like more of an authority too.
- (3) **Research helps you develop your Thesis.** When it comes to Paragraph 5 and your Conclusion, you need to do more than restate your Thesis Statement from Paragraph 1. When you have added research, you can use that to make your Conclusion's version of the Thesis deeper and more sophisticated.
- (4) **Showoff your mad writing skills.** To add a quote or two from research helps you make your paper longer and look better, show off your research ability, give you a chance to demonstrate you know how to hug and punctuate quotes properly, and gives you a place to show off your In-Line Citation skills. And if you need a Works Cited page, this is how you get to add a source or two to make your WC page look longer/better.

Global Concerns

Ask your IB Teacher about this one. IB writing is a whole new level of madness. When and if you need to write this kind of Paragraph 4, your teacher will walk you through it. Fun for you, right?

Well OK, in IB World, **Global Concerns are the 5 ways of looking at anything you read or write.** These are broad categories that allow you to generate Themes/Thesis Statements and compare different texts. Just for fun here they are:

IB GLOBAL CONCERNNS

Culture, identity and community
Beliefs, values and education
Politics, power and justice
Art, creativity and the imagination
Science, technology and the environment

Writing a Conclusion

Bringing it all to an end (finally)

First of all, never, never start with “In conclusion.”

Actually if you must, go ahead and start with those two words, and then just delete them. Usually whatever you have written following the words “In conclusion,” are just fine on their own, and sound better without the Transition. If not, you may feel better using:

So far

And so

Therefore

As I have shown

To sum up

Now there are many ways to write Conclusions, depending on the kind of paper you have been assigned. Some may need a **Counter-Argument**, some may need a **Global Connection** or a **contrast/compare element**. This all depends on your prompt, your teacher, and especially whatever you did in **Paragraph 4**. In much longer papers, these extra pieces can be included in additional body paragraphs before the Conclusion. In any case, you need to end with some kind of summation and a conclusion – and for these we go back to our **WHAT / HOW / WHY** pieces.

Begin by summing up what you have done. Use your **WHAT and your **HOW’s**.**

Remind your reader what you have shown already – that your **WHAT** ideas have been shown through evidence from the text that focused on the two **HOW’s** you brainstormed at the start.

Then restate the **THESIS – the **WHY**. Don’t simply repeat it, but explain it better.**
After all, you have spent the whole essay leading up to this, so you should be able to say the Thesis again with a bit more depth or style. Perhaps the added material from Paragraph 4 will help you understand your Thesis in a better way.

Example of a Conclusion (1st Draft):

Remember we are using **Yellow** for **Transitions and Introductions**.

The Green is for the **WHAT** – the concept words optimism, happiness, adventure.

The Blue represents the three **HOWs** – the evidence we found for the **WHAT** concept words.

The Purple is the **THESIS** itself, the **WHY** – that happiness depends on optimism no matter what.

So, for our SpongeBob Example Conclusion we have this:

As I have shown, the author is trying to teach us how to experience a greater sense of happiness in life. Through the use of the motif of taking driver’s tests over and over, and the metaphor of jellyfishing where SpongeBob may be stung but still enjoys himself, as well as the naïve optimism of greeting the day and your grumpy neighbors with a smile and the words, “I’m ready,” the author has demonstrated how important it is to have an optimistic attitude. Happiness, it seems, depends on being optimistic and taking life as an adventure no matter what troubles may come along.

Conclusions – page 2

Counter-Arguments

Some teachers want students to add in a Counter-Argument to show that the student can see where arguments might be made against the Thesis he or she has offered in the essay. This Counter-Argument can take up a whole paragraph or a few pages in a much longer paper. In short essays, a single part added to the Conclusion can be enough to show the student has at least considered that someone might object to the Thesis.

The simple way to add one of these is to include a Counter-Argument and a Rebuttal in the Conclusion. In the Counter-Argument the student brings up one valid argument against the Thesis. Make sure the argument is valid – worthwhile and not simply a silly argument that does not matter. **You can use the formula: “Some might argue that ...”**

Then offer a quick Rebuttal stating that the Counter-Argument, while interesting, is not enough to disprove the Thesis, especially after all the evidence that has already been shown in the essay. You can offer this Rebuttal quickly with either a “but” after the “Some might argue” or you can start a new sentence with a transition taken from the options for “Compare/Contrast.”

Reworking the SpongeBob Conclusion

It's time to add to the first draft of the Conclusion we have so far. There are a couple of more pieces we need. We'll start by adding a Counter-Argument. So you can see all of this clearly, the Counter-Argument is in Grey and the Rebuttal is in Turquoise.

As I have shown, the author is trying to teach us how to experience a greater sense of happiness in life. Through the use of the motif of taking driver's tests over and over, and the metaphor of jellyfishing where SpongeBob may be stung but still enjoys himself, as well as the naïve optimism of greeting the day and your grumpy neighbors with a smile and the words, “I'm ready,” the author has demonstrated how important it is to have an optimistic attitude every day. Some may say that SpongeBob is naïve and unrealistic. While this is true, more of us would still agree with the authors that happiness is tied to your chosen outlook on life, even if that outlook is only wishful thinking. Happiness, it seems, depends on being optimistic and taking life as an adventure no matter what troubles may come along.

What's Left?

Your essay can be done right here and now – well, except for revising and editing and proofing. Or you can go back to the start and add an **Introduction**, known as a **Hook** because it is supposed to grab your reader's attention. AND if you add one at the start of the paper, you need to connect back to the **Hook** with your last sentence of your **Conclusion** in the **ReHook**.

The Hook

The Optional Introduction ... and Ending

The Hook

Never start an essay worrying about your opening sentence. That's deadly. You'll end up staring at a blank paper or a blinking cursor on the screen.

After you have been writing for a while, or even when you get to the Conclusion, it will be time to go back and add an Introduction to your essay. An Introduction can either give context for your Thesis or add something creative that will grab your reader's attention.

What is a Hook?



Pirates have hooks. So, it sounds like we need one for SpongeBob? Well, a Hook is really just a sentence or two that grabs the reader's attention back at the start of the essay.

A HOOK comes in two parts – a couple of sentences at the start of your paper and a final sentence at the end of the paper. These sentences connect the beginning and the end, tying your ideas neatly together in one pretty package.

Suggestions for HOOKs are attached so you can see different ways of coming up with Introductions.

When an Introduction/Hook does not naturally jump out at you as you are writing, the process you use is to go way back to the Brainstorming part of the essay. Then think "sideways." Lateral thinking allows you to make connections that are not linear – or straight and logical. Thinking sideways allows you to be creative and come up with an idea that is connected to your text but in an interesting or odd way.

Connecting the Intro and the Conclusion

Just remember that after you add a Hook at the start of your paper you are not done yet. Nope. **The Hook must also be connected to the final sentences in your Conclusion**, otherwise you will end up having a PBJ sandwich with only the top slice of bread. Things get very messy that way. Luckily, writing a Hook means you never have to worry about how to end your essay – you know you will always be able to come back to the Hook and connect the end of your paper to the start.

The Hook – page 2

Thinking Sideways – Getting Started / A SpongeBob Example

For example, with SpongeBob, think about other ideas that are connected to Cartoon Network, children's cartoons, sea animals, sponges, friends, neighbors ... or your concepts of optimism, happiness, and adventures. After a few minutes you might come up with things like:

the sea:	storms, shipwrecks, pirates, sharks, beaches, starfish
cartoons:	Scooby Doo, Tom and Jerry, Bugs Bunny, Mickey Mouse
adventures:	treasure hunts, mysteries, space travel, Star Wars
optimism:	ready for anything, can do, "Just do it," C3PO? R2D2

As I doodle with ideas, I can start to see something I like. There are so many different ways to go with a HOOK, but one thing I like at the start is to compare SpongeBob's enthusiasm and happy outlook on life with Scooby Doo – a cartoon character who also goes on adventures. Or I could compare SpongeBob's optimism with C3PO's opposite outlook on life as a robot who thinks nothing will ever turn out well ("I have a bad feeling about this ...").

Now that I have an idea, I play with a two-sentence opening, keeping in mind I will want to add part of the HOOK again at the end of the paper. Here's one attempt:

If you ever find yourself in the middle of an adventure or a mystery, it helps to stay optimistic. Just like the loveable dog in the cartoon Scooby Doo who each episode faces an adventure with a great outlook and some extra snacks, SpongeBob Squarepants shows us how to see the find happiness in the simple adventures (and mysteries) of daily life. In SpongeBob Squarepants, a cartoon series on Cartoon Network, the author introduces us to a very happy fellow who is optimistic and enjoys each new adventure in life. Through the use of the motif of adventure in failing his many driving tests and the metaphor of jellyfishing, as well as being always ready to show kindness especially to his grumpy neighbor and his demanding boss, the author reveals how one's happiness is conditioned by a sense of optimism and adventure, no matter how many difficulties and unexpected challenges one may encounter in life.

The Hook is the underlined portion. Then you simply add on the Thesis you wrote back at the start to make a really good, strong, opening paragraph.

Hooks allow you to be wild and creative and really reach out to grab a reader.

The Hook – page 3

The ReHook: Connecting the Conclusion back to the Hook

Now that you have a Hook at the start of your essay, all you need to do is connect this Hook back into the end of your Conclusion. Starting with the Conclusion that we have written already, I find a way to add one more sentence at the end that helps me to circle back to my opening Hook.

As I have shown, the author is trying to teach us how to experience a greater sense of happiness in life. Through the use of the motif of taking driver's tests over and over, and the metaphor of jellyfishing where SpongeBob may be stung but still enjoys himself, as well as the naïve optimism of greeting the day and your grumpy neighbors with a smile and the words, "I'm ready," the author has demonstrated how important it is to have an optimistic attitude every day. Some may say that SpongeBob is naïve and unrealistic. But more of us might agree with the authors that happiness depends on being optimistic and taking life as an adventure, no matter what troubles may come. Happiness, it seems, depends on being optimistic and taking life as an adventure no matter what troubles may come along. So whether life is a great mystery to be solved or as simple as passing a driving test, there is no mystery that a person's optimistic attitude and sense of adventure will lead to a happier life.

Here the **underlined portion** is the ReHook – the portion that brings your paper back to the place you started. Simple as that – I started talking about Scooby Doo and mysteries, and ended by tying in that idea to my main Thesis.

Is a Hook/ReHook necessary? Nope.

But a Hook does add some style and sophistication to your essays. A Hook may get your reader interested at the start, or help persuade them of your ideas, or simply add more energy and enjoyment to your essay. Adding one is up to you. But in the end, Hooks can add a lot to the overall effect of your essay.

And one of the best benefits to a Hook is that it gives you a direction – you know where your paper will end, because it is always moving towards this one last line that connects back to your start. A Hook can give you the confidence to know how and when to end your essay, along with the sense of ending it with a memorable strong finishing line.

What follows is a complete essay based on our SpongeBob Example.

Here is the whole process we've just walked through, carried through to the end.

Optimism as a way of life in the cartoon *SpongeBob Squarepants*

If you ever find yourself in the middle of an adventure or a mystery, it helps to stay optimistic. Just like the loveable dog in the cartoon *Scooby Doo* who each episode faces an adventure with a great outlook and some extra snacks, *SpongeBob Squarepants* shows us how to find happiness in the simple adventures (and mysteries) of daily life. In *SpongeBob Squarepants*, a cartoon series on *Cartoon Network*, the author introduces us to a very happy fellow who is optimistic and enjoys each new adventure in life. Through the use of the motif of adventure in failing his many driving tests and the metaphor of jellyfishing, as well as being always ready to show kindness especially to his grumpy neighbor and his demanding boss, the author reveals how one's happiness is conditioned by a sense of optimism and adventure, no matter how many difficulties and unexpected challenges one may encounter in life.

In the *SpongeBob Squarepants* cartoons, the main character remains happy and seems very optimistic about his chance of passing the driver's test which he always fails, and the joy of jellyfishing, even though he often gets stung badly while on these adventures. In one episode we watch as SpongeBob arrives to meet Mrs. Puff, the Driving Instructor. Although she is not enthusiastic about seeing SpongeBob, she climbs into his boat for the test. SpongeBob seems very happy throughout the test, even thinking he might pass, though he crashes the boat into pedestrians, signs, and many other boats. The show's author is making fun of how naïve SpongeBob is to think he could pass this test, even though he has never passed a test before. In

this way, the author demonstrates how important it is in life to keep trying to accomplish our goals no matter how often we fail to live up to expectations. In many other episodes, SpongeBob enjoys his hobby of jellyfishing, always optimistic that he will have a lot of fun visiting the jellyfish. Armed with his net and accompanied by his friend Patrick, SpongeBob seems to forget how often the jellyfish have in the past not understood his intentions and have stung him. Again, the author shows us just how clueless SpongeBob seems to be, or else, how SpongeBob chooses not to think about the risks and painful stings he might receive. Looking beyond the challenges and risks in life, SpongeBob teaches us how important it is to have a positive outlook, especially since life is not always easy or painless. By showing how SpongeBob is optimistic about jellyfishing or passing his driving test and how he disregards the challenges and pain involved in his failures, the author displays how being happy depends on just this kind of optimism and spirit of adventure in life.

In addition, SpongeBob's optimism is seen as he happily goes about his daily life, clearly repeating his motto, "I'm ready," and greeting others with kindness no matter how they treat him. In just about every episode, SpongeBob can be heard repeating, almost endlessly, the words "I'm ready." The writer has shown us, through this often-repeated personal motto, that SpongeBob naively believes he is ready for anything and everything in life. That's a good thing since SpongeBob has to deal with a grumpy neighbor named Squidward, and a demanding boss called Mr. Krabbs. Regardless of how badly these characters treat SpongeBob, he continues to show them kindness. The author demonstrates that challenges like these in personal relationships can be overcome when one is ready for anything. SpongeBob's attitude of being ready for anything teaches us all to find happiness no matter what may happen or who we may have to put up with.

As I have shown, the author is trying to teach us how to experience a greater sense of happiness in life. Through the use of the motif of taking driver's tests over and over, and the metaphor of jellyfishing where SpongeBob may be stung but still enjoys himself, as well as the naïve optimism of greeting the day and your grumpy neighbors with a smile and the words, "I'm ready," the author has demonstrated how important it is to have an optimistic attitude every day. Some may say that SpongeBob is naïve and unrealistic. But more of us might agree with the authors that happiness depends on being optimistic and taking life as an adventure, no matter what troubles may come. Happiness, it seems, depends on being optimistic and taking life as an adventure no matter what troubles may come along. So whether life is a great mystery to be solved or as simple as passing a driving test, there is no mystery that a person's optimistic attitude and sense of adventure will lead to a happier life.

Writing an Essay – The Fast and Furious Chart

When it comes time to write an essay, and you don't have time to go through the whole process described in the Connecting the Dots workbook, here is a simple outline to help you get your ideas organized. As you move forward you may want to remember these tricks:

- **Start by pulling apart your prompt.**
- **Brainstorm about your text to help you write your Thesis Statement.**
- **Don't forget that your Topic Sentences should have elements from your Thesis.**
- **Make the last sentences in each paragraph connect back to your Thesis too.**
- **Hug quotes in as evidence can follow the four sentence model explained above: Show Where & When / Introduce Who, then Quote (Citation) / Explain / Explain**
- **Add a Hook to grab your reader (and connect to the Hook with your final sentence).**

If you need reminders about any of these hints you can refer back to each smaller section in the workbook that deals with that skill. It will take time to bring all these pieces together, but then when it comes to writing we all know one thing to be true:

Writing is never done, sooner or later it's just due.

So, start by writing a first draft – a first try at the essay. You can always go back and Revise it, Edit it, and Proof it, to make your essay better. For more on these steps, including helpful Checklists, see Section 8 of your copy of Dr. Schellenberg's Patented Cheat Sheets. **Remember** too that your teacher is here to help you through this process. Show your teacher your first draft of your essay. Ask for help. Your essay and grade will almost certainly be better if you do.

Let's get started with Paragraph 1

Paragraph 1		Your purpose is to explain what the paper is about; make an Assertion and describe how you will prove it
	Introduction or Hook	Write the Introduction after you have written a lot of your essay; use the first 1-2 sentences to set up your Thesis or describe the context for your essay
	Thesis / Assertion	Model: <i>In the [genre] [Title] by [Author], the author [verbs] [WHAT]. Through [HOW1] and [HOW2] the author [verbs] [WHY].</i>

Fast and Furious – Page 2

Paragraph 2		Here you will start proving your Assertion with one set of quotes from your text to work as evidence
	Topic Sentence P2	Explain quickly what this paragraph will be about – how you will deal with the Big Ideas of the Thesis and use evidence from the text.
	Evidence (HUG 1)	Sentence 1: Give context where in the text and when. Sentence 2: Say who is speaking, then give the quote. (Make sure to add an in-line citation.) Sentence 3: Explain why this quote matters to text. Sentence 4: Explain why it matters to your Thesis.
	Evidence (HUG 2)	Repeat the same process here with more of the same sort of evidence.
	Last Sentence P2	Sum up what you have been trying to prove and make sure to connect back to your Assertion in the Thesis!
Paragraph 3		Your second body paragraph continues to give evidence from the text to prove the Assertion.
	Topic Sentence P3	Repeat the process from Paragraph 2 with the same Big Ideas, but a new direction with your evidence.
	Evidence (HUG 3)	
	Evidence (HUG 4)	
	Last Sentence P3	

Paragraph 4 is a mystery. Here you can bring in other evidence from another source (a book, article, website, interview), or compare a second text to the one you have already written about, or show how your Assertion has Global Concerns (an IB thingy). Maybe Paragraph 4 is simply a place where you bring in some Counter-Arguments that shed doubts on your Assertion, which you can name and then explain away. Whatever happens here will be up to the prompt your teacher has given you. If you are unsure, ask your teacher what to do here.

Paragraph 4		See below for more on optional 4 th Paragraphs.

Fast and Furious – Page 3

Conclusion		Finally, you summarize your proof and explain why your Assertion is true even when others doubt it.
	Summary -- Thesis	Explain again what your Thesis has been and why you have been trying to prove it is true (but be careful and do not simply repeat your Thesis from Paragraph 1).
	Hows 1-2, Hows 3-4	Explain that you have proven your Thesis using two different kinds of evidence from the text – use general terms in describing the evidence instead of repeating what you have said already in Paragraphs 2 and 3.
	Counter-Argument	“Some might claim that ...” Add in a complaint others might make about your Thesis – making sure that your counter argument is important and not silly.
	Response	“However ...” But then explain quickly why this counter-argument is not valid.
	Expand Thesis	Restate your Thesis one last time – by saying it in a more developed form than you first stated it in Paragraph 1. Deepen your Thesis here. (If you can’t say anything better about it after writing this essay something may be seriously wrong here ...).
	ReHook	If you started with an Introduction of some kind in the first couple of sentences in Paragraph 1, then make sure you circle back and connect to them in some way here at the end.

Now that you've written your draft, take a hint from a professional:

Read your paper back to yourself out loud. Listen to the words in the sentences with your ears. Your ears know grammar better than you think. Trust your ears. If something does not sound right, write it again. When you speak, you almost always use grammar correctly. Not so much when you text, email, or type. That's why you need to read your paper back to yourself and listen for missing verbs or sentence fragments or things that make no sense to you. Oh and please -- do not try to sound like someone you are not. **Write in your own natural voice.**

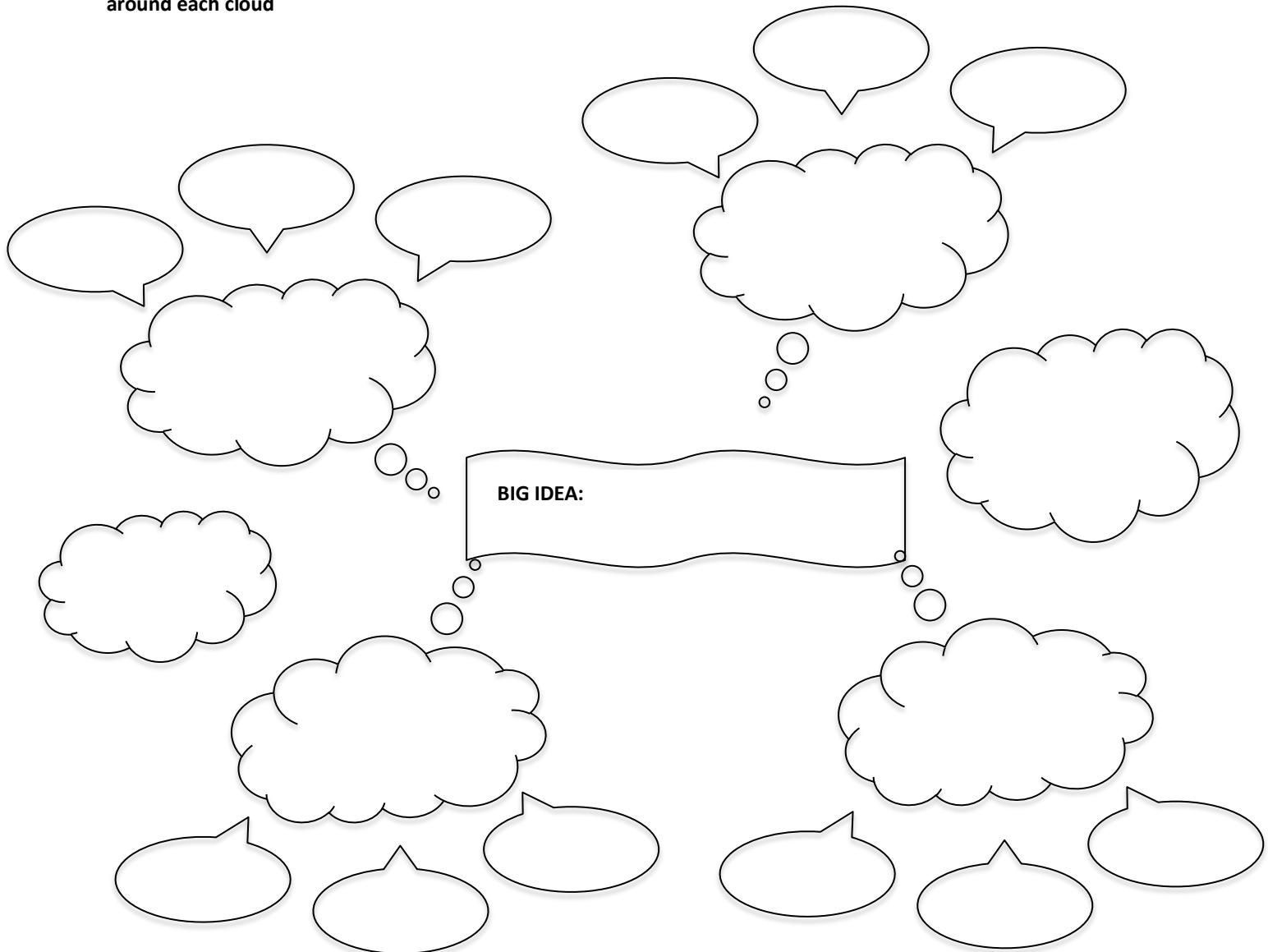
Trust yourself. You are fine just as you are for this essay. Just be you when you write.

Blank Charts and Helpful Pages

Brainstorming a Response to a Text

Start with what comes to mind, then organize

1. Put the BIG IDEA in the center – what is the essay about anyway?
2. Brainstorm some ideas and write them in the clouds
3. Start to think of examples from the text you could use as evidence of your cloud ideas. Put reminders of this evidence in the bubbles around each cloud



Brainstorming Charts

The time you spend brainstorming will save you a lot of time and effort later when it comes to writing, and revising, your paper. Remember the Golden Rule of English:

Work Smarter, Not Harder!

Use this chart when it comes time to brainstorm your next essay. You can thank me later. (Note that the Thesis Statement at the bottom will be explained in the next handout.)

WHAT “Concepts”	Write in here the concepts you brainstormed about your text.	
HOWs “Evidence”	Write down 4-8 examples from your text which you could use to explain the Concept words in the WHAT. It helps to group these so you can have more than 1 example of each of the Concept words under WHAT.	<i>A blank chart is available for your use at the end of this workbook.</i>
WHY “Theme”	Using the WHAT words, and the best evidence (HOW’s), describe a universal idea you have discovered in the text. Write a complete sentence.	
THESIS STATEMENT “Assertion”	Using your WHAT and HOW’s and WHY you can now build your Assertion – your answer to the prompt or the main idea of your essay. Follow this model:	In the [genre] [Title] by [Author’s full name], the author [verbs*] [WHAT]. Through the use of [HOW 1], and [HOW 2], the author [verbs*] [WHY]. (* list of verbs to use is attached)

Reference: Word Charts

Strong Verbs / Transition Words

Teachers read hundreds of essays every year. Trust me, you need your essay to be (1) memorable for all the right reasons, and (2) easy for your teacher to grade because it gives the teacher what she or he asked for and is expecting.

For your Thesis Statement (and throughout your essay)

Use strong verbs instead of weak, little verbs a third-grader would use. Do not, for example, talk about what the author “says” or “shows.” Also be careful not to use a Thesaurus to find the most important-sounding words you can so that your author “dissembles” or “divulges.”

Find the sweet spot with words like these:

analyzes	emphasizes	highlights	observes	reveals
confirms	establishes	illustrates	offers	suggests
considers	examines	implies	portrays	supposes
describes	explains	includes	presents	supports
develops	explores	indicates	promotes	thinks
displays	exposes	introduces	questions	underscores

For your Transitions throughout your essay

Transition words help you organize your ideas. They can also help your reader understand how one sentence or paragraph follows another. Here too, you want to use helpful words without falling into the trap of ending your paper with “In conclusion.” Never, never, type those words. **Instead, consider using these transition words whenever needed:**

Addition	Timing	Illustration	Compare/Contrast	Cause/Effect
First (of all)	Before	For example	As, Like	Therefore, Thus
Second, Third ...	Previously	For instance	Just as, As with	Certainly
Also, Besides	Now	Such as	Whereas, Likewise	Consequently
In addition	Immediately	Including	In the same way	So, And so
Furthermore	Then	To be specific	Similarly	As a result
And, Further	Following	Specifically	But, Yet, Apart from	For this reason
Another, Again	Later	To illustrate	Instead, However	Since, Because
Again, Next	During	In other words	Although	If ... then
Moreover, Then	After	One instance	In comparison	Accordingly
Last, Finally	While	So, Thus	Still, Despite this	Due to
Subsequently	Eventually	In the case of	Even though	Leading to

Paragraph / Hugging Chart

Directions: To complete a Body Paragraph you can start with your Topic Sentence and Last Sentence. Knowing where you are starting and ending helps you decide the best way to add the evidence in between. And remember that these two sentences are built from the WHAT and HOW for the Topic Sentence, and the HOW and WHY for the Last Sentence.

Start by remembering your WHAT / HOWs / WHY. Then fill in these two sentences before turning the chart over to work on Hugging in your Evidence.

Topic Sentence	Add a Transition Phrase	
	Connect the WHAT and HOW you will be using for this paragraph	
Hug 1		
Hug 2		
Last Sentence	Start with a Transition	
	Sum up the evidence and show how it supports your Assertion in the Thesis – use HOW's to show WHY	

To Complete: Copy and paste all of your sentences from this chart onto your MLA Template in paragraph form. Once you have done this a few times, you will no longer need to use the chart. It will all become second nature to you!

Paragraph / Hugging Charts – Page 2

Hug 1	Perhaps use a Transition	
	Sentence 1: Give context when and where in the text does the quote come	
	Sentence 2: Say who is speaking	
	“Quote” (Citation).	
	Sentence 3: Explain why the quote matters in the text	
	Sentence 4: Explain why the quote matters to your Assertion (WHY)	
Hug 2	Add a Transition Phrase	
	Sentence 1: Give context when and where in the text does the quote come	
	Sentence 2: Say who is speaking	
	“Quote” (Citation).	
	Sentence 3: Explain why the quote matters in the text	
	Sentence 4: Explain why the quote matters to your Assertion (WHY)	

Suggestions for Hooks

Name of Grabber	Example
The Challenge	<i>“Today I am going to ask you to do something very difficult, but something that will change the world.”</i>
The Provocative Question	<i>“What would you do if you had no money and your family was starving? Would robbery be justified?”</i>
The Powerful Quote	<i>“What’s in your wallet?”</i> A relevant quotation from a famous source can be effective. The quote loses impact, however, if the audience does not know the quote or does not recognize the author.
The Surprising Statistic	<i>“The average internet user spends fewer than ten seconds on a web page before moving on.”</i>
The Unusual Fact	<i>“There is a patch of garbage the size of Texas floating in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. It is made up of plastic and debris that has been caught in the currents in the ocean.”</i>
The Personal Story	<i>“I remember when I was fourteen and broke my arm. That was one hot, long, summer.”</i>
The Unexpected	<i>“I have been multitasking my entire life, I am always doing several things at once. I believe multitasking has ruined my brain.”</i>
The Humorous Opening	<i>“I have been multitasking my entire life, I am always doing several things at once. Right now I am speaking to you, watching a ball game on my phone and doing a load of laundry back at the hotel.”</i>
The Teaser	<i>“Three minutes from now, I will tell you something that you will never forget as long as you live.”</i>

MLA Formatting (Use for all essays)

1. General Format:

One inch margins
Black ink
Times New Roman
12 pt font

Lisa Simpson
Mr. S. (2)
English 10 Honors
September 10, 2014

Lisa Simpson
Mr. S (Period 2)
English 12

Hear Me Roar: The Role of Women in Homer's *The Odyssey*

Lisa Simpson
Mr. S (Period 2)
English 12
September 10, 2018

Hear Me Roar: The Role of Woman in Homer's *The Odyssey*

3. Title:

Informative and creative
Two spaces below header
Center justified
NO BOLD, NO UNDERLINE

Lisa Simpson
Mr. S. (Period 2)
English 12
September 10, 2018

Hear Me Roar: The Role of Woman in Homer's *The Odyssey*

The intelligent and cunning Penelope in Homer's *The Odyssey* suggests the importance of women in the ancient Greek culture.

Penelope manages to hold her own, facing the numerous obstacles that arise while Odysseus is gone.

Among these obstacles, Penelope manages to outwit the many suitors who desperately seek her hand in marriage. Antinous, a suitor, remarks: "Here is an instance of [Penelope's] trickery" and goes on to explain how Penelope said she would marry when she finished Odysseus's burial shroud, but the suitors later learn that she unraveled the shroud at night (line 96). Determined not to be forced into an undesired marriage, Penelope convinces the suitors to leave her alone until she finishes the shroud, yet she never intends to finish it. Later, Penelope outwits the suitors once again with the test of the great bow. While Penelope is not able to prevent the kingdom from deteriorating in Odysseus's absence, the fact that she is been able to elude the suitors' advances with such intelligence supports the importance of women in the ancient Greek culture.

2. First Page at Top:

Information:

Name
Teacher Name
(Pd#)

Class

Due Date

Format:

Times New Roman
12 pt font
Single space

The intelligent and cunning Penelope in Homer's *The Odyssey* suggests the importance of women in the ancient Greek culture.

4. Body:

Times New Roman
12 pt font
Double space
Left justified
1/2 inch indentations start of paragraphs
No space between paragraphs!

