

Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Connecting the Dots – Organizing a Longer Essay

This is a condensed version of what is covered in the “Connecting the Dots” Workbook

Start with your Thesis Statement – this is the claim you are making in your essay. Maybe you are trying to persuade the reader of something, or you are answering a prompt/question given to you by the teacher. Note: If you are telling a story, you will not have a Thesis Statement, but for most other types of essays you'll need a main point, called a claim.

When you are analyzing a text of any sort, you can use some form of the following template for a Thesis Statement:

Template:

In this passage from [Title of text], **a** [type of text – novel, play, poem, article] **by** [Author's name], **the author** [verbs – something like conveys, describes, explains, illustrates, shows] [WHAT you will argue – a theme perhaps] **through the use of** [HOW: Literary Device / Rhetorical Technique 1] **and** [Literary Device / Rhetorical Technique 2], **revealing** [WHY this is important – you claim about the author or text or life in general].

Example:

In this passage from Hamlet, a play by William Shakespeare, the author explains the nature of evil through the use of imagery of an unweeded garden and his motif of rot and decay, revealing that evil naturally invades and takes over when not confronted and plucked out before it can take root.

The really cool thing about a Thesis Statement is that once you have this written, you have a map for the rest of your paper.

- The topic sentences that begin paragraphs 2 and 3 come from your first two examples of Literary Devices or Rhetorical Techniques.
- The quotes from the text will focus on unweeded gardens and rot/decay.
- The explanations of these examples will focus on how they reveal the nature of evil.
- The conclusion will confirm that evil takes over when not confronted.

Let's outline this using the example from Hamlet on the following page.

Connecting the Dots -- page 2

Paragraph 1	<p>Whether you are watching an Avenger's movie or a classic play, you'll see how the heroes have to deal with someone who has chosen the path of evil. Surprisingly, the role of evil in these texts share many similarities, whether the author speaks of superheroes in space, or a prince in long ago Denmark. In this passage from Hamlet, a play by William Shakespeare, the author explains the nature of evil through the use of imagery of an unweeded garden and his motif of rot and decay, revealing that evil naturally invades and takes over when not confronted and plucked out before it can take root.</p>
Paragraph 2	<p>Hamlet speaks of what seems wrong in the state of Denmark by referring to the kingdom as an unweeded garden. In his first soliloquy (Act I, scene 11, lines 129 and following) Hamlet deplores the nature of the world, especially "that it should come to this" (I.ii.137). Shakespeare has Hamlet sound so disrupted by the evil he sees that Hamlet has lost all desire to live. Indeed, he has become tired of the corruption and system of lies that have grown up in the kingdom since his father's death. He then compares the problems he sees in Denmark with "an unweeded garden that grows to seed. Things rank and gross in nature possess it merely" (I.ii.135-137). Evil has acted like weeds, which tend to invade and take over a garden when not plucked out. A gardener needs to stay alert and pull weeds out before they grow too deep, or else the garden will become overgrown and, "rank." Here Hamlet is using a metaphor to describe how small evils which were not confronted early enough have taken over all of Denmark.</p>
Paragraph 3	<p>Shakespeare also employs a motif of rot and decay throughout the play to illustrate how it is the nature of evil to work slowly into a position where it can ruin or spoil all that is good in the world. For example ...</p>
Topic Sentence – the first HOW from the Thesis Statement above	
Evidence 1	
Explanations A and B; an explanation tied to text, and another tied to claim	
Evidence 2	
Explanations A and B	
Summation	
Topic Sentence, using the second HOW from the Thesis Statement ... and now continue the process	