

# THE WRITING PROCESS

## STEP ONE: Prewriting

*Ask yourself questions*

Purpose: Why am I writing this piece? Am I writing to entertain, inform, or persuade?

What effect do I want to have on my reader?

Topic: What do I already know about my topic?

Audience: Who is my audience? What might they already know about my topic? What do they need to know?

*A few different ways....*

**Freewriting-** Write for 10 minutes with no particular form. Just simply get your ideas out.

**Listing-** jot down phrases or words that relate to your topic.

**Web-** Connect ideas through the use of a web.

**Outlining-** organize your thoughts/data in an outline.

## STEP TWO: Drafting Introductions

### INTRODUCTIONS

Three things an introduction has to do:

1. Catch the reader's interest  
It should make the reader want to read more.
2. Set the tone  
The feeling you want to convey about your topic:  
Serious? Angry? Sarcastic? etc....
3. Present your thesis statement

\*\*\*Begin your essay in a **CREATIVE** way...be **ORIGINAL!**\*\*\*

*Techniques for writing introductions- possible ways to begin:*

1. Begin with an anecdote or an example.  
Anecdote= a short, interesting, or humorous story
2. Begin by stating a startling fact or by adopting an unusual position.  
\*Shock the reader! It makes them curious.
3. Use an appropriate quotation.  
People are more inclined to listen if you are introduced by someone who's opinions they respect.  
\*Note- when writing about literature, do NOT begin the essay with a quote from that book.
4. Start with background information.  
\*Help them to understand what your thesis is all about.
5. Begin with a simple statement of your thesis.  
\*Sometimes, the best approach is a simple straightforward one.

### THESIS STATEMENT

*What is a thesis statement?*

Definition: a sentence that states the main idea and purpose of your essay by taking a position on a particular topic.

*Where should the thesis statement appear?*

The thesis statement should appear in the last sentence of the introductory paragraph.

*Writing a thesis statement*

When you write a thesis statement, you should think carefully about the words you use. Follow these guidelines:

Be concise and strong  
Make it a statement, NOT a question  
Take a FIRM and CLEAR stand on your issue  
AVOID using “I, me, or my” in your thesis  
DO NOT use “you, your, or yourself”  
Don’t begin with a transition  
Don’t be too wordy

Examples of good and bad thesis statements:  
*Label the statements “good” or “bad”.*

\_\_\_\_\_ Joe Gargery portrays the physical characteristics of an adult man, but reveals the essence of an innocent child.

\_\_\_\_\_ Jagers is a mean character in Great Expectations.

\_\_\_\_\_ The separation of social classes during the Victorian Age relies solely on education.

\_\_\_\_\_ I think Estella’s attitude and behavior are a direct result of her upbringing by Miss Havisham.

\_\_\_\_\_ The conditions of the Satis House cause Estella to shield love, more so than the revengeful plan of Miss Havisham.

\_\_\_\_\_ The convict is not entirely bad, or is he?

\_\_\_\_\_ The superficialities of the world influence Pip to treat his loved ones poorly.

\_\_\_\_\_ Pip’s childhood concern with physical appearance inevitably shapes him into a snobby adult.

\_\_\_\_\_ Miss Havisham sits alone in her dark, decaying, old house.

### STEP THREE: Drafting Body Paragraphs

The body paragraphs present ideas that support and expand on the thesis statement. You must work to achieve unity throughout your body paragraphs.

*Here's how to achieve unity...*

1. Read over your thesis statement, determine what your stand is
2. List key ideas along with supporting details
3. Check to see that the supporting details support your thesis statement
4. Choose direct quotes from the text to analyze

Each body paragraph must begin with a topic sentence that includes a transition and proves the thesis.

**Transitions:** bridges, they let the reader know where you have been and where you will be going. These words or phrases connect all the ideas in the essay.

Relate the main idea from your last paragraph to the idea you will present in the new paragraph.

Does a transition **HAVE** to be the **FIRST** word of the sentence? \_\_\_\_\_

Does a transition **ONLY** have to be one word? \_\_\_\_\_

**Topic Sentences:** a sentence that states the main idea, or topic of the paragraph. The topic sentence is the first sentence; therefore, the reader knows what to expect.

*Examples:*

Joe is truly the epitome of forgiveness, where Pip sees a virtual canyon between Joe and himself because of social status, Joe sees nothing but the Pip he has always known and loved.

Despite that fact that Joe is an underlying constant in Pip's life, it is only in Pip's later years that he comprehends Joe's life lesson- the money one possesses is not equal to a person's worth as an individual.

Stylistically speaking, Joe is represented differently than the other characters in the novel because he is rather unremarkably described.

**Analysis:** conclusions, inferences, and interpretations drawn based on evidence from the text. The majority of the paragraph should contain the writer's analysis supporting the thesis statement, substantiated with examples from the text.

## **Direct Quotations:**

*Properly set up your quotations in the essay...*

### *Quoting Mechanics*

*You must embed the quote within your sentence ensuring that you create a complete sentence. Cite using MLA citation.*

1. Introduce the quote.
2. Copy the quote verbatim.
3. Analyze the quote.
4. Quote needs to fit in the sentence as a complete thought.

## **Examples**

### *(1) Embedding and citing a quote*

Pip describes himself and Joe as “fellow –sufferers” due to the physical abuse and mistreatment they endure by Mrs. Joe (Dickens 8).

*Citation:* Author’s name and page number in parentheses

### *(2) When embedding a quote written in past tense, you must change it to present in order to keep a consistent tense throughout your paper.*

*Original quote-* “I saw in this that Estella was set to wreak revenge on men, and that she was not to be given to me until she gratified it for a term” (155).

After Estella warns Pip not to love her, he finally realizes that “[she is] set to wreak revenge on men”; although, it is clear through his statement, “given to me until she gratified it”, that he fails to see that he too is a part of this vengeful (155).

### *(3) When writing about literature, you must write in 3rd person point of view; therefore, if the passage is in 1st or 2<sup>nd</sup>, you must revise it to present.*

*Original Quote-* “My dream was out; my wild fancy was surpassed by my sober reality;” (83).

When hearing the news about his great expectations, Pip realizes that “[his] dream [is] out” (83).

(4) *Block Quote- 4 lines or more...no changes need to be made to quote.*

Not with pleasure, though I was bound to him by so many ties; no, with considerable disturbance, some mortification. If I could have kept him away by paying money, I certainly would have paid money. As time approached I should have liked to run away (Dickens 117).

1. Single spaced
2. Smaller font size
3. Indent on both sides
4. No quotation marks needed
5. Author's name and page number in parentheses

#### STEP FOUR: Drafting Conclusions

The conclusion is the final paragraph of the composition.

The thesis statement is restated, in different words, in the first sentence of the concluding paragraph.

The main ideas of the essay are restated.

No new information is given.

No new analysis is offered.

Here the reader is left with a final impression of the essay.

