

Name _____
Period _____

Anglin's Answers For Writing The Perfect Essay



Mrs. Haney, my high school English teacher, created this original handbook at Worthington High School in 1988. It has been modified with her permission.

THESIS STATEMENT

- A **thesis statement** is the one sentence that tells your readers what the entire essay will be about. It is **ALWAYS** the last sentence of the first paragraph.
- To write a thesis statement—
- A thesis statement is made up of three (3) parts:
 1. The restricting or softening phrase
 2. The topic, and
 3. Your opinion about that topic.

1. The restricting or softening phrase--

This is a phrase or words used at the beginning of the thesis statement to make you, the writer, seem like a reasonable, objective, sensible person, *not* a braggart, a stuck-up, or a snob. You **soften** your thesis so it does not seem quite so strong, quite so ready to start disagreement with your reader.

Use such phrases or words as: **To many people, Many people feel that, According to some individuals, Those people with red hair would agree that. . .and so forth.** You **LIMIT** your thesis so it does not sound quite so strong and dictatorial.

We live in an enormous universe, so you want to **RESTRICT** your thesis to include: people, scholars, students, men, women, mothers, fathers, parents, children, etc. Very rarely will you write a paper to include the birds, the bees, all animals, people, and trees!

2. The topic—

The topic may be anything at all. (**JUST DO NOT USE FACTS.**) It may be about walls, floors, clocks, watches, hamburger, refrigerators, one type of refrigerator, and a make of automobile—anything at all. **I WILL USUALLY GIVE YOU THE TOPIC, WHICH YOU WILL DEVELOP.**

3. Your opinion about the topic—

Your opinion about the topic may not actually be **YOUR** opinion, but at least it is a position you feel you can write about. **AGAIN, DO NOT USE FACTS!** You may want to say something is: beneficial, stimulating, a challenge, frustrating, disgusting, helpful, many-faceted, unusual, varied, frightening, and so on. **NEVER, NEVER, NEVER** use—boring, nice, bad, dumb, or stupid. They are hard to prove and give no ideas to support.



THESIS EXERCISE

Directions: Using the above suggestions, fill in the chart below with a myriad of phrases.

Restricting phrase	Topic	Opinion

Directions: Using the above chart, create five of your own thesis statements on the lines below.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Congratulations! Now you know what that foreign word English teachers love to use is—
The THESIS!

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPHS

When writing an introductory paragraph, several rules are absolutely necessary.

1. Write down your thesis statement before doing anything else.

Write it some place other than in the paragraph (like on a note card). You will need to study it to help develop the paragraph.

2. Use one of the 10 methods taught as the framework for your intro. Paragraph.
3. Always include the name of the book, underlined, and the author in this paragraph somewhere (when writing about a book).
4. Always include at least **five** sentences in this paragraph.
5. Begin the paragraph (sentence one) with a general statement. This means a statement about all people, or an idea that is true wherever you go, or an idea that is accepted by many, many people.

6. Sentences in the middle (sentences 2-3 and maybe more if it is a longer paragraph) develop the idea and method you chose for this introductory paragraph from the 10 styles taught to you.

7. The next to last sentence will be a transition sentence to tie the idea of the paragraph to the thesis statement. Most papers will need a transition sentence.

8. The **last** sentence is the thesis statement. NEVER, NEVER, NEVER, write it anywhere else but as the last sentence of the introductory paragraph.

Now, read the paragraph aloud; have someone else read it aloud. If there is a problem understanding the meaning, or a hesitation in the reading because something does not fit, or something else is needed, rewrite it or edit out the problem.

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPHS

TEN TYPES OF METHODS TO USE TO DEVELOP THE PARAGRAPH

1	Discuss it historically (reference to time)
2	Use a noun from the thesis statement
3	Use a different noun from the thesis
4	Define a key term
5	Discuss it in terms of people's attitudes about the topic
6	Compare the topic to something else
7	Use an opposite point of view to the thesis
8	Use a question
9	Use a quotation or a bold statement
10	Use specific details or an interesting anecdote (story)

1. Historical

Throughout history, teaching has been one of the most honored professions. In Egypt, Greece, and Rome, very often the most expensive slaves were the highly educated ones who were the reputed teachers of children of wealthy citizens. Later, in the Middle Ages, the priests in the churches were the respected teachers because they alone could read and write. In Elizabethan England, teachers were well regarded as ones with wisdom and great knowledge of practical affairs. Also in America during its growth and development, teachers were admitted as sources of help, guidance, and wisdom. Although teaching was once a highly respected profession, today it is scorned and degraded. Some people say that teaching today is an extremely frustrating profession.

2. Taking a noun from the thesis statement

People have many frustrations in their lives. Sometimes the source of their frustration is in their families. Sometimes a friend or older neighbor frustrates them. Other times, poor choices in life have given them many seemingly unsolvable problems. Even though people have frustrations in their many ways, often their professions give the greatest problems. Many teachers feel that teaching is an extremely frustrating profession.

3. A different noun from the thesis statement

Throughout the years, many professions have emerged as satisfying and honored means of earning a living. Many people find satisfaction working as accountants, doctors, lawyers, engineers, or computer programmers. Others enjoy working in the arts as musicians, artists, dancers, or writers. Still others find themselves happily working with people, just as teachers do. Although in the past teaching seemed to be a more satisfying profession, today it has many problems. To many teachers, teaching is an extremely frustrating profession.

4. Define a key term

Teaching is a word that has several meanings. According to the Webster 7th Unabridged Dictionary it means, "the profession in which the tutelage of children is practiced." According to Funk and Wagnall's 3rd Edition, teaching means, "The caring of and the imparting of knowledge to others." Experts seem to agree that teaching is a positive and beneficial profession. Despite the lovely-sounding definitions and the experts' positive opinions, teaching can be horrible. Many teachers feel that teaching is an extremely frustrating profession.

5. Various People's Attitudes

Students, parents, and community members seem to have differing views on teachers and the teaching profession. Students often feel that teachers have a license to be the boss, to order them around, to give them hours of homework each night, to grade them unfairly, --in other words, to make their lives miserable. Parents seem to view the teacher as one who demands too much effort from their children, who causes pain, mental anguish, and frustration for them also. Other community members may feel that all teachers care about is demanding higher taxes for higher pay. The teachers themselves, though, usually put the emphasis elsewhere, agreeing that teaching is not

worth all the animosity of others. Therefore, most teachers agree that teaching is an extremely frustrating profession.

6. Compare the topic to something else—

The teaching profession could be compared to that of medicine. They both work with people who are in need—students need knowledge; patients need medicine. They both also work with a wide range of attitudes. The teacher has students who hate school and refuse to do their work; she also has the studious workaholic who does each assignment meticulously and still worries that it is incorrect. The physician has patients of widely differing attitudes as well. One patient may hate doctors and refuse to take the prescribed medicine. The other may be a hypochondriac who complains of every ailment and cannot get enough prescriptions and medications to satisfy him. Although a comparison seems reasonable, upon further thought the analogy breaks down. The teaching profession seems to have many more different problems than medicine does. Many teachers feel that teaching is an extremely frustrating profession.

7. Opposite Point of View—

For many little children sitting in school, it seems reasonable to want to be a teacher. They see the job as easy—just telling little kids what to do. The teacher seems to know everything—a true source of wisdom and help. Also, the teacher has power; the kids get in trouble if the teacher calls home about a problem. Even though kids think teaching is easy and fun, others know it is a profession filled with difficulties. Many teachers feel that teaching is an extremely frustrating profession.

8. Using questions to open the introductory paragraph: Use no more than TWO questions!

Have you ever felt fractured with too much to do and no time to do it? Have you ever wished for a nine-day week or a thirty-six-hour day so you could accomplish all you have to do? Many parents, students, and workers have these feelings. Even though everyone seems to feel these frustrations at times, it seems that teachers feel them more than most people. Often teachers say that teaching is an exceptionally frustrating profession.

9. Using a quotation

"A mind is a terrible thing to waste." As often as this sentence is stated in a commercial supporting the Negro College Fund, each teacher who hears it will always feel a tug, a tightening of the heart. Teachers work hard to encourage and develop the minds of their students. All teachers are vitally aware of the needs and problems each child brings with him to the classroom, and teachers suffer with the child when those inadequacies are evident. Even though most teachers are dedicated and always work to help their students, some teachers feel the hard work is not worth the many problems involved. Some teachers indeed feel that teaching is extremely frustrating.

10. Using specific details or an interesting anecdote

Mrs. Kelly sat at her desk after an especially hot trying day of teaching. By 8:30 that morning the room had been stifling and airless, the kids restless, talking and uncooperative. The odor of thirty sweaty bodies had assaulted her nose while her own sweat ran in rivulets down her neck. By lunchtime further trials beset her as Pete clobbered Joe for darting to pick up Pete's new Bengals pencil box. Then Joe had retaliated by tripping Pete later on the playground. Finally at 2:00 Mrs. Larkins had called and complained for thirteen solid minutes that her little Karen was only being allowed to read once a day when everyone knew Karen was the best reader in the class and should read quite often as a model for the other students to follow. By 3:00 Mrs. Kelly sat with her head in her hands. Even though she had always loved teaching, on this day she was having second thoughts about it. Many teachers would agree that teaching is an exceptionally frustrating profession.

PRACTICE INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPHS

Name _____

Period ____ date _____

Directions: Choose ONE of the 10 methods taught to you to write an introductory paragraph on the thesis: Many students believe high school is frustrating. Your example should be almost IDENTICAL to the "teaching is frustrating" models we studied.

Circle the method you tried to mimic:

- | | | | |
|----------------|------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Historical | Definition | Opposite point-of-view | Anecdote (story) |
| Noun | Attitudes | Ask a question | |
| Different noun | Comparison | Quotation | |

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4.(Transition) _____

5. (Thesis) _____

PRACTICE INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPHS

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4.(Transition) _____

5. (Thesis) _____



RULES FOR MIDDLE PARAGRAPHS aka BODY PARAGRAPHS

Directions: Read the following topic paragraph. The thesis is: His parents feel that Timmy is extremely helpful.

Timmy is helpful because he works around the house. **Indeed,** he does the dishes everyday to be helpful. Timmy cleans off the table, taking the dishes to the kitchen sink to scrape. He then rinses them and puts them in the dishwasher. He wipes the table and counters with soapy water, making sure all food is wiped clean from the dishes. Next he washes any pans he couldn't get into the dishwasher. **Also,** Timmy helps by watching his little sister. He takes her outdoors and swings her or plays with her in the sandbox. He plays ball with her passing it back and forth. **Certainly** Timmy helps by cleaning his room **as well.** He picks up his clothes, such as his pajamas and sneakers, putting them away neatly. He also makes his bed, vacuums the carpet, and stacks his schoolbooks neatly. **Helpful would be a good word to describe Timmy.** (*rewording the T.S.*)

OR

Timmy is certainly helpful in doing the dishes, helping with his sister, and cleaning his room.
(*summary of the three majors*)

1. **TOPIC SENTENCE**, the first sentence of the paragraph has a paragraph hook beginning it and then the first reason or support for the **THESIS STATEMENT**.

Example: Thesis statement is **-His parents feel that Timmy is extremely helpful.**

Bring down 3-4 words from the thesis statement and put them into the topic sentence of the next paragraph. This makes the **PARAGRAPH HOOK TRANSITION**. A **sample topic sentence—Timmy is helpful because he works around the house.**

2. **Second sentence** in the middle paragraph is a **MAJOR SUPPORT**. It supports the topic sentence giving one way the topic sentence is true. (You will have a total of 3 **MAJORS** per paragraph). It also must have a standard transition patterned after the words listed below.

Example: **Indeed,** he does the dishes everyday to be helpful.

3-4 or more. Sentences 3, 4, or more are minor support sentences, which give details, examples, specifics, and names of things about the **MAJOR** support.

Example: 3. Timmy cleans off the table, taking the dishes to the kitchen sink to scrape.

4. He then rinses them and puts them in the dishwasher.

(or more) He wipes the table and counters with soapy water, making sure all food and remains from the dirty dishes are wiped clean; then he washes any pans that he couldn't get into the dishwasher.

ALWAYS USE SPECIFIC DETAILS, SPECIFIC EXAMPLES, AND SPECIFIC NAMES OF ITEMS IN MINOR SUPPORTS. ****You may have more than one sentence per minor.**

5. **Sentence 5** is your second MAJOR SUPPORT of the topic sentence. It gives another way the topic sentence is true. IT MUST HAVE A STANDARD TRANSITION FROM THE LIST ABOVE AS THE BEGINNING WORD OR WORDS.

Example: Also, Timmy helps by watching his little sister.

6-7 or more. Sentences 6-7 or more are minor supports with details, examples, specifics, and names of things.

Example: He takes her outdoors and swings her or plays with her in the sandbox.
He plays ball with her passing it back and forth.

8. **Sentence 8** is your third MAJOR support of the topic sentence. As always, use a Standard Transition Word(s) in the beginning of it.

Example: Certainly Timmy helps by cleaning his room as well.

9-10 or more. Sentences 9-10 or more are minor supports giving details, examples, specifics, or names.

Example: He picks up his clothes, such as his pajamas and sneakers, putting them away neatly.

He also makes his bed, vacuums the carpet, and stacks his schoolbooks neatly.

11. **Concluding sentence** Either reword the topic sentence (but keep the identical idea) or summarize the three MAJOR support sentences.

Example: Helpful would be a good word to describe Timmy. (Rewording the topic sentence.)
Timmy is certainly helpful in doing the dishes, helping with his sister, and cleaning his room.
(Summary of the three MAJORS)



STANDARD TRANSITIONS WHY DO WE NEED THEM?

Perhaps you have already noticed that certain words and phrases recur often in your writing as you develop an essay. If you want to acknowledge a point that isn't debatable, you may write, "It is true that. . ." or "Admittedly," or "Obviously," or any one of several similar expressions. These are the con transitions, notifying the reader that you intend to concede a point. A few sentences later you will come back with a "Nevertheless" or "But. . ." that clearly signals your intention to present arguments in your favor.

Such words and phrases are among the standard transitional devices for leading your reader through an argument. They notify him briefly and efficiently that conflicting points of view are being presented; without them, the conflicting statements seem quite irrational. Here are a few more examples to illustrate the difficulties you can run into:

Girls are a nuisance. They are wonderful.

The project had value. It wasted time.

He was a brilliant actor. He often performed miserably.

These paired statements simply don't make sense. Yet, the same statements become perfectly clear when they are supplied with transitions..

True, girls are a nuisance. Nevertheless, they are wonderful.

Admittedly, the project had value. But, it wasted time.

He was, to be sure, quite a brilliant actor. Yet, he often performed miserably.

These examples are, of course, oversimplified in order to emphasize the necessity for proper transition; but if each sentence were a fully developed paragraph, the problem of transition would be the same.

You will be tempted to believe that because a connection between ideas is perfectly clear to you as a writer it is also perfectly clear to the reader. Not so! The reader needs to be reminded constantly of exactly where you stand. So, never omit the transition between paragraphs as you move back and forth between pro and con arguments.

Not all mechanical transitions, of course, can be classified as strictly pro or con. *What* you use and *how* you use it will depend upon the purpose of the paragraph it introduces. You will use one kind of transition when you are shifting your point of view:

Girls are a nuisance. Furthermore, they are gossipy.

And another kind when you are simply adding another paragraph in the same vein:

Girls are, in fact, a menace to society.

Girls are, in fact, the most marvelous creatures in the world.

The best guide to transitions is common sense and a list like the one on the previous page or the list in your Write Source 2000 book on page 106.

Admittedly	In addition	On the other hand
And	In Fact	The fact remains
But	Indeed	Therefore
Certainly	It is true that	Thus
Clearly, then	Moreover	To be sure
Consequently	No doubt	True
Even so	Nobody denies	Undoubtedly
Furthermore	Obviously	Unquestionably
Granted	Of course	Yet



SAMPLE MIDDLE PARAGRAPHS

One reason that teaching is frustrating is that the various tasks a teacher performs take too much time. One task taking too many hours is **planning for classes**. The teacher must type master worksheets for examples or for tests and quizzes. She must also prepare study guides and read over every item to be covered in class. She must also create steps for teaching new material, anticipate questions, and prepare the best method for answering those questions. **Another time** consuming task is going to **committee meetings**. Every week staff or department meetings take many hours after school. **Also**, staff members meet to discuss students who are in difficulties in class or at home. **Other meetings** may be necessary concerning school curriculum, new bell schedules or graduation requirements. **One other task** (which definitely takes the greater share of a teacher's spare time) is **grading papers**. Prep periods are spent grading. Finally, at home, the teacher grades until 2:00 or 3:00 every morning. **Indeed teaching takes too much time, which causes vast frustration.**

A second reason teaching is frustrating is that often the teacher hassles with students and parents. One type of hassle is with **tardy students**. They stand out in the hall and dash through the door as the bell rings causing serious injuries to the teacher who is trying to shut the door. Others come running down the hall with complete disregard for life or limb of other students and are angry when they see the teacher close the door before they get there so that their attitude in class that day is nasty. **Still other students** become livid when they receive detentions for shouting, knocking the teacher down, and trampling on other students as they go to their seats. **Still, another** hassle is with the students' parents over their **grades**. Every student is sure he should have received an "A" on every assignment and is angry if the grade is not the one expected. Students **also** continually ask the teacher at grade time, "How did I get *that* grade?" Then they go on to say, "I spent hours on my work and I study hard every night and always have my homework done." All the teacher can do is again show the earned grade. **Finally** the teacher has hassles with

the **parents**. The parent phones the school **first** to complain that the teacher is not doing her job because she is not giving her student the individual attention he should have. **Also** the parent comes into the school to visit the teacher to give her the benefit of her wisdom. The parent wants the teacher to quit disciplining her child because the child tells her that he has done nothing to deserve it. **Ultimately**, the father appears at the teacher's classroom to threaten property damage to the teacher's home, loss of job, or bodily harm if the teacher does not allow his child the freedom and independence he deserves because of his superior intellect. **It is certainly true that teachers have hassles over tardiness, grades and parental demands.**

Finally, **teaching is frustrating because of the extremely low pay a teacher receives.** The low pay prevents a teacher from buying **suitable clothing**. The teacher's family never has stylish outfits. The children must wear hand-me-downs and outgrown items. The teacher herself must wear rags and polyester dresses at least twenty years old. **Also**, the low pay prevents the teacher from **buying nutritious and plentiful food** for her family. She must buy old, spoiled produce and generic items only. She becomes gaunt and ill from eating spoiled food and few meals. **Finally**, the low pay prevents the teacher from having **adequate housing**. She must live in a shack. She cannot afford housing with a decent kitchen so she must cook over a fireplace or eat uncooked food. The house will not have windows or doors either so that the family is cold and ill all winter. **Truly**, **because of low pay, a teacher suffers from bad nutrition, unsuitable clothing, and extremely poor housing.**



Body Paragraph
High school is frustrating

Name _____
period ____ date _____

Directions: This is a sentence outline. Each line below **MUST** be a complete sentence. Use your web to write ONE body paragraph about how high school is frustrating. Your TOPIC will be ONE of those "clouds" on the web. Your MAJORS will be each ARROW. The minors are the specific details you add to explain the majors.

You **MUST** begin each MAJOR with a transition word from page 11.
You **MUST** repeat the word **FRUSTRATING** in each major or at the very least in the minors.

A. Topic Sentence with transition in it. (It supports the thesis SUBTOPIC)

1. Major # 1 _____

a. Minor (details, examples, names of things and numbers—specifics)

b. Minor _____

2. Major # 2 (Supports topic sentence) _____

a. Minor _____

b. Minor _____

3. Major # 3 (Supports topic sentence) _____

a. Minor _____

b. Minor _____

Concluding Sentence (Reword the topic sentence or summarize the majors!!) _____

THE CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH

REQUIREMENTS:

It is often beneficial to use a standard transition in each sentence. It **must** have 5 sentences.

The **first sentence** is the thesis statement (recopied).

The **second sentence** usually summarizes the paper—
Take one word from each topic sentence (body) OR

Restate the thesis in different words.

The **third and fourth sentences** are progressively more general on the topic of the paper.

*****OPTIONS FOR YOUR LAST THREE SENTENCE*****

Use the Introductory Method (one of 10) you used in the introductory paragraph only make it more general on the topic paper.

Use "some people, the nation, the world, the universe" in that order for becoming more general on the paper's topic.

Use *the topic of the paper* and expand on that (for example, use a few values, many values, vast numbers of values, etc.) to become more general.

The **fifth or last sentence** may take the topic into the future. "It could be hoped that in the future...in centuries to come...Future generations may find that...In the future... In decades to come...etc."



SAMPLE CONCLUDING PARAGRAPHS

Strong Example # 1

Indeed teaching is a frustrating profession. For many reasons, therefore, teachers seem to feel inadequate, berated, and insecure. Certainly the stress and frustration may soon spill over and detrimentally affect others whose lives touch that of the teacher. In addition the future success of our nation's education may be seriously in jeopardy. In fact, it could be true that in centuries to come the very best of our nation and its government could be shaken if the complicated problem of teacher frustration is not adequately remedied.

Strong Example # 2

Indeed it is true that teaching is an extremely frustrating profession. Certainly teachers feel that they are giving too much of themselves and are receiving only frustration as a reward. Each year the frustration, problems, and stressful situations only seem to multiply. It is evident that a solution must be found to solve these frustration and problems. In the future, it is hoped that society will develop strategies to alleviate the serious problems facing teachers today.

Directions:

1. Number the sentences in the two strong examples above.
2. Cross out the words for "teaching is frustrating," and make them read for your paragraph: 7th grade is frustrating.
3. Transpose (copy) the changed sentences above to the worksheet on the next page.

PRACTICE CONCLUDING PARAGRAPHS

Name _____

Period _____ date _____

Concluding Paragraph # 1

1. Reword or restate the thesis _____

2. Summarize the paper—one word from each paragraph _____

3-4. Progressively more general _____

5. Take the topic into the future _____

PRACTICE CONCLUDING PARAGRAPHS # 2

1. Reword or restate the thesis _____

2. Summarize the paper—one word from each paragraph _____

3-4. Progressively more general _____

5. Take the topic into the future _____
