

Mrs. Fisher's Easy Paper Step-by-Step to a Better Grade

Instructor's want to read your thoughts (except for those rare few who want to read theirs parroted by you). I am only concerned with the majority here. Follow these steps for a better grade. Follow "Format Rules" for a flawless presentation.

Introduction:

Begin your paper with your **thesis**. What is the over-arching big idea you want to convey to your readers? REMEMBER: THE THESIS IS ABOUT THE HUMAN CONDITION (**THEME**). This should be in the first paragraph, for clarity, and should cover the major points (very briefly) that you will make in your paper.

Body:

- 1) Use a **transition** to get to your first supporting idea of your argument. This transition may be at the end of the first paragraph, or it may begin the second. You will have to decide which location works better.
- 2) State, without qualifiers, the **idea** that you will be discussing in this paragraph.
- 3) Insert a **quotation** from the text, usually, as an example of your idea. You will also be using **supporting quotations from other sources** from time to time. Be sure to follow the format in "Quotations and How to Handle Them."
- 4) IN THE SAME PARAGRAPH, **discuss the idea**, how the quotation illustrates that idea, and show how any supporting quotations from your secondary source or sources also support the idea.
- 5) Transition to the next idea, which will signal a new paragraph.

NOTE: If you have conflicting information, which is the common case when an author is exploring a strong theme or concept, you should build your paper by incorporating contrasting elements. You may use a pro/con alternating paragraph arrangement, or you may present one side of your argument followed by the other side. It is usually more persuasive to end with the side of the argument that proves your thesis.

Continue the pattern above until you have built up a strong argument for your thesis. When you are finished with the proof, write a conclusion.

Conclusion:

Should re-iterate your thesis and briefly outline or list the proven points. The final sentence should relate the new knowledge to the human condition (what can we learn from this as humans?).

YOUR PAPER'S STRUCTURE SHOULD LOOK LIKE THIS:

HEADER INFORMATION: Use "Format Rules" handout/MLA guidelines.

TITLE: Centered. Use "Format Rules" handout.

FIRST PARAGRAPH:

THESIS

BRIEF LIST OF IDEAS

TRANSITION

SECOND AND SUBSEQUENT PARAGRAPHS:

TRANSITION (if not used in previous paragraph)

IDEA

QUOTATION (FROM THE NOVEL OR TEXT BEING EXAMINED)

Use handout "Quotations and How to Handle Them"

SUPPORTING QUOTATION IF WANTED OR NEEDED (FROM TEXT OR SECONDARY SOURCE)

Use handout "Quotations and How to Handle Them"

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF IDEA AND QUOTATIONS.

"FOR" AND "AGAINST" ARGUMENTS MAY HAVE TWO SUB-STRUCTURES:

A
A
B
B

OR

A
B
A
B

YOUR STRONGEST ARGUMENT SHOULD BE YOUR ENDING ONE

CONCLUSION:

THESIS RE-STATE, POINTS COVERED, NEW KNOWLEDGE RELATED TO THE HUMAN CONDITION