

The Analytical Paragraph – The 7 Basic Components

You write an analytical paragraph (note: a body paragraph of an essay is the same thing as an analytical paragraph) in response to a question about literature. For example, you would not respond in an analytical paragraph to the question - *What is the plot of the novel Animal Farm?* However, you would respond in an analytical paragraph to this question - *In what ways do the pigs abuse their power in Animal Farm?* The analytical paragraph lays out and explains the evidence that supports your thesis. Each analytical paragraph should include the following:

1. Topic Sentence – This tells the reader what your paragraph is about; it is the main idea of that paragraph. It should be the first sentence of your paragraph. If you are writing an essay the topic sentence will connect to the thesis of your essay. Your topic sentence can not be a factual statement. It must be something that can be argued for or against.

2a. Context of Quote – For each quote you choose, you must orient the reader to what is going on in the text. What is happening in the text in the pages where your quotation is found in the book. As a rule, do not write more than two sentences of context. DO NOT SUMMARIZE the entire story here.

2b. Quote Introduction – For every quote you use you must identify who says, writes, or thinks your quote. Who says your quote? The author? The narrator? A certain character?

The basic form of the quote introduction is the subject + verb + quote:

Bart says, "Cool! I love detentions!" (19) or Matt Groening writes, "Bart ran away"(2). You need to include the "Bart says" or "Groening writes", or else your sentence is incomplete.

A more sophisticated form of the quote introduction weaves the quote into your own writing (what I have termed as quote blending – see yellow pages page ?). In this form the context and the quote become one.

On his way to school, Bart does not hesitate to "pull out his slingshot and launch a rock through the window"(15).

If the quote is long and complex, use a colon instead of a comma before the quote.

Bart is a dreamer. He believes: (long and complex quote goes here)

2c. Quote – This is a short sentence or passage which you copy directly, word for word, from the text because you want to use it as evidence to prove your topic sentence and/or thesis. You need to put quotation marks ("...") around it because the words are written by somebody else. Remember, your quote is your evidence and must support what you are trying to argue.

2d. Page Reference – Put the page number to indicate where in the text you found your quote. The page number is placed at the end of the quote in parenthesis.

(CORRECTLY CITE)

2e. Analysis – Explain in your own words how the quote supports your topic sentence. Break the quote down. Talk about specific words, phrases, or ideas found in the quote. Make specific connections between your quote and the topic sentence (also connect it to the thesis in an essay). Do not just restate the quote or summarize the story.

3. Concluding/Transition Sentence – If you are writing just one analytical paragraph then this sentence serves as your conclusion. It answers the question "what's your point?". It should tie back to the topic sentence. If you are writing an essay, and this is one of your body paragraphs, then this sentence is used to move from the idea you are currently writing about to the next idea you will write about in your next body paragraph. It serves as a transition.

Despite the easy accessibility of distractions such as *soma*, Obstacle Golf, and women, Bernard Marx attempts to find a deeper meaning to life. In his interactions with Lenina, the woman he desires, we see Bernard trying to break away from the instant gratification enjoyed by the majority of society. He unsuccessfully suggests they take a walk in the country instead of playing Electromagnetic Golf and refuses the *soma* sundae she offers him on their date. On their way home, Bernard attempts one last time to access a deeper level of companionship with Lenina. Huxley writes, "On their way back across the Channel, Bernard insisted on stopping his propeller and hovering on his helicopter screws within a hundred feet of the waves.... 'Look,' he commanded" (90). In this passage, we see Bernard attempting to share a moment of silence and observation with Lenina. His desire to sit with her and watch the turbulent waves reflects his quest to connect with something larger than himself, like the natural world. Despite the vast array of entertainments available to him, Bernard still feels that something is missing and attempts to seek out a deeper meaning for his life.