

Dynamic Instruction's 2021-22 Critical Writing Notes

Fantastic Writers four paragraph expository essay structure:

Paragraph #1= Introduction

- 2-3 Sentence Hook: must be well thought out and interesting (**4 sentence max**)
- 1 sentence background (explains **OR** provides more info about the topic and acts as bridge from the hook to central idea)
- 1 sentence central idea/main idea: clearly answers prompt and tells readers what the essay is about (main idea sds are optional in intro, but REQUIRED in conclusion paragraph; the prompt is usually in the main idea)

Total sentences:4-6

Recommended Total lines on STAAR sheet:3-5

Remember to indent when forming paragraphs

Paragraph #2=Body paragraph #1

- Transitional phrase + Supporting detail #1= **1 complete sentence** (the first sd is a reason/idea that backs up your main idea)
- (New)Transition **word** +Example #1 sentence= **1 complete sentence ONLY** (you *don't* always have to have a transition here)
- Follow up/elaboration of previous sentence. **No transition** is needed here. **1-2 complete sentences**
- (New) Transition **word** +Example #2 sentence= **1 complete sentence ONLY** (you *don't* always have to have a transition here)
- Follow up/elaboration of previous sentence. **No transition** is needed here. **1-2 complete sentences**
- Closing Transition **word** +**Paragraph closing sentence**=**1 complete sentence** (not really a summary, but can be, but more like a **synthesis** where all previous ideas are combined to one overarching idea or a **Segway to the next sd.**)

Total sentences:5-8

Recommended Total lines on STAAR sheet:5-8

Paragraph #3=Body paragraph #2

- (New)Transitional phrase + Supporting detail #2= **1 complete sentence** (*use your strongest supporting detail*)
- (New)Transition **word** +Example #1 sentence= **1 complete sentence ONLY** (you *don't* always have to have a transition here)
- Follow up/elaboration of previous sentence. **No transition** is needed here. **1-2 complete sentences**
- (New) Transition **word** +Example #2 sentence= **1 complete sentence ONLY** (you *don't* always have to have a transition here)
- Follow up/elaboration of previous sentence. **No transition** is needed here. **1-2 complete sentences**
- **(No transition) Paragraph closing sentence =1 complete sentence** (not really a summary, but can be, but more like a **synthesis** where all previous ideas are combined to one overarching idea; **do not Segway** here because the conclusion is next.) **NO Closing TRANSITION HERE because conclusion paragraph starts with one.**

Total sentences:5-8

Recommended Total lines on STAAR sheet:5-9

Paragraph #4=Conclusion

- (New)Closing transitional phrase + restate main idea and includes the 2 supporting details= **1 complete sentence** (*just change up a few words in the main idea sentence using synonyms, but this time add a closing transition and summarize the sds; only (Note:)break up into multiple sentences to avoid run ons*)
- Final closing sentence (**quotes** are highly recommended) **1 complete sentence**

Advanced expository: 3rd person; active voice, limit opinions & generalizations

Total sentences:2-3

Recommended Total lines on STAAR sheet:2-4

Essay tips:

- Always **brainstorm** before starting any drafts and come up with as many ideas as possible. Think and plan before writing to ensure the **best ideas**
- The STAAR composition page includes **about 26 lines**, so do not write too big or small. (**Avoid 2nd person; except hook & final closing**)
- Always revise (**improve it using blue**) and edit (**correct it in red**) rough drafts before going to the final. Try to incorporate **1 personal example**, strong voice, imagery, adjectives, proper nouns, adverbs, and a variety of sentences (simple, compound, complex) and **indent** each paragraph
- **Do not overuse transitions** as they can make your essay robotic, unnatural, or formulaic and hurt voice (expression)
- **Avoid repetition, especially repetitive sentence starters; Do not** introduce new ideas in the conclusion; use **strong action** verbs

*Expository transitional phrases (body paragraph #1) some can be used in body 2

It goes without saying...; _____ has many _____ and the first/most important/ultimate is... Most would agree that.....

One doesn't have to be a scientist to know that _____ is _____ An obvious/less known/obscure benefit/reason for _____ is _____

Start the paragraph with the supporting detail and not a transition;* My/The first reason; First of all; According to; First and most importantly; **To illustrate my point; First and foremost; The first important/critical/vital reason; *My primary reason;* **Presently; As a matter of fact;** With all things considered;

Upon careful deliberation/analysis, I believe/I know/my favorite After a careful analysis of the pros and cons/benefits of _____, I know/believe/am certain/conclude....

Upon/After/While considering the importance of _____ one/I must mention its main contributing factor: _____

** Expository transitional phrases (body paragraph #2) some can be used in body 1

In many ways, In the same way; Along with; Aside from; Not to mention; Moving on/along; To enumerate;

To emphasize; In essence; With this purpose in mind; Another reason, By the same token; **Once again;**

Adding on to the fact that; Not only +verb; As a matter of fact; In like manner; Moving along; Equally important;

Not to mention the fact/belief/notion; It goes without saying (Obviously); Believe it or not; At the very least;

Most importantly; My final reason; Last but not least; Above all; More than anything else; Now more than ever My secondary reason/point; With that being said; (A/My) chief/primary contributing factor/reason _____ is _____ is = (My chief/primary reason that reinforces hard work's importance, is that it leads to _____)

Narrative transitions are more time based: Later, It all started when; meanwhile; Before I knew it

***Expository conclusion transitional phrases:

In closing/summary/conclusion; In a nutshell; To wrap it all up; In the final analysis; With all things considered; To conclude; To make the circle complete; At the end of the day; Completing the square; All in all; To summarize; In conclusion; To sum up my thoughts; As was previously stated; To reiterate;

*Transition words used to add information of similarity or provide examples or explain:

For example; Furthermore; Also; For instance; Moreover; Additionally; In addition; Likewise; Similarly; To illustrate; To enumerate; Therefore; Likewise, /In like Manner; Indeed/Of course= (strong agreement); Secondly; In lemans terms; (Basically, it means); One example; Another example/instance; More specifically; To illustrate my point; To clarify;

**Contrast transitions that show differences from previous information:

However, while this may be true; Although, In light of; Conversely; Contrary to popular opinion/belief; Nevertheless; Despite the fact that; Even though;

***Result or effect transitions:

Thus/Therefore= (That's why); As a result; Consequently; Thus; Subsequently; Hence; Consequentially;

Sample Hooks/Attention Grabbers: (usually 2-3 sentences)

- 1. Interesting, thought-provoking question (follow up with elaboration):** Did you know that Indian Americans from South Asia make up roughly 1% of America's population? Any visitor or resident to my community would find this hard to fathom since Indians are so heavily concentrated and at times overrepresented in my school, community, and city.
- 2. Shocking, surprising or interesting info (follow up with elaboration):** There are over seven different types of sea lion found throughout the world.
- 3. Anecdote:** An anecdote is a very short, mini story that illustrates a point. (2-3 sentences max) Be careful to stay on topic and **use anecdotes that don't require a lot of context or background. Not doing this** would make your intro too long and confusing/off topic.
- 4. Dialogue:** An appropriate dialogue does not have to identify the speakers, but the reader must understand the point you are trying to convey. Use only two or three exchanges between speakers to make your point. Be sure your anecdote is short, to the point, and relevant to your topic. Stay on topic and be short!!!
- 5. Quote+Hyperbole:** According to *Time Magazine*, "More than 1/3 of Americans are obese." If this trend continues, we'll become a nation inundated with the obese.
- 6. Onomatopoeia+ Figurative Language:** Splat, splat was the sound my tears made as they flowed down to the floor of our school auditorium like rain drops on a cool autumn day. This would be the beginning of the worst day of my life.
- 7. Idiom OR JOKE:** 21st century job seekers face a bleaker and more daunting task of seeking a job more now than ever before. Most encounter THE CATCH 22 from rejection letters denying them a job due to lack of work experience.
- 8. Interjection:** Whew! I screamed to myself after discovering I aced the STAAR writing test with an advanced score. That day, I got the biggest surprise of my life...
- 9. Imagine/Picture/Dream/Conceptualize:** Imagine a classroom void of rules. Kids would be punching, fighting, cheating, and totally out of control.
- 10. Making a concession (mainly for persuasive):** It is perfectly understandable that some Americans would agree with the notion of flag burning as a protected right guaranteed by the US Constitution as a right of self-expression and protest; on the contrary, it is my strong and emphatic opinion that this very act is the antithesis of personal liberty and civil protest that should never be safeguarded under the US Constitution.
- 11. THOUGHTFUL & HUMOROUS Description:** What comes to your mind when you hear about something that can be a friend at times or a nuisance, loves toys, and at times allergic to personal hygiene? An annoying sibling?... Close, but not quite. It's a dog!
- 12. Describe the setting (narrative/creative):** Wow! I thought as I gawked at the floating apartment complex that featured a luxury casino, state of the art IMAX movie theater, and a circular-world class buffet, over-flowing with every delectable dish imaginable. The gargantuan floating apartment complex included 13 floors and was a cruise ship which I would often gaze at the pristine ocean to see blue fish resembling frisbees swimming gracefully in the sea.

Sample Final closing sentences (Can you find different closers?):

- Now that you know all about my favorite pet, what is your ideal furry or non-furry companion?
- Wouldn't you just love to have one of these cute and furry creatures?
- With excellent qualities such as a positive attitude, providing thoughtful prizes, and always willing to allow second chances, it's no wonder Mrs. Smith is the best teacher on Earth!
- Now that I have enlightened you about America's number one threat, it is time to get the word out about this alarming issue. Act now before it is too late!
- Hopefully, you have enjoyed reading about my first time attending a live, NFL-football game. Head to the nearest local football stadium and purchase your tickets today.

***6. As Winston Churchill famously said, "Success is going from failure to failure, without loss of enthusiasm."**