qwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmrtyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmrtyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmrtyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmrtyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmrtyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmrtyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmrtyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnmqwertyuiopasdfghjklzxcvbnm

|  |
| --- |
| ESSAY GUIDELINES & TIPS  Oxford Area High School-English Department  2015-2016 School Year |

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**OAHS English Department**

**Essay Guidelines & Tips**

This packet contains a model and samples created for a standard five-paragraph expository essay. However, these guidelines can be expanded and applied to writing assignments of any type or length. The expectation is that every student in English classes grades 9-12 will be adhering to these guidelines when completing formal writing assignments beginning with the 2015-2016 school year.

**CONTENTS**

MLA FORMAT…………………………………………………………………...….…………3-4

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH.……………………………………………...…………….5-6

BODY PARAGRAPHS…………………………………………………………….….………….7

CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH.………………………………………………………….……8-9

5-PARAGRAPH ESSAY SKELETAL OUTLINE.…………..…..……………………..…..10-11

STYLE TIPS…………………………………………………………………………….……12-13

CONVENTIONS TIPS…………….…………………………………………………...…….14-15

GRADING RUBRIC………………………………………………………………….…………16

**MLA Format**

**ALL** essays mustadhere to the following formatting guidelines\*:

* MLA formatted header, heading, and title – see example below.
* Typed in Times New Roman 12 pt. font
* Double-spaced with 1-inch margins
* NO extra spaces between paragraphs
* *Italicize* novels, plays, and magazine titles
* Indicate poems, short stories, chapters of books, and articles with “quotation marks”

\*Unless otherwise instructed by a teacher to use an alternative format such as APA or Chicago Style.

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

**MLA Header, Heading & Title EXAMPLE**

Your last name [insert] page #

Your name

Your teacher’s name (ex: Mrs. Jones)

Your course (ex: 9 College Prep English)

The current date (ex: 10 June 2015)

Title

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

## In-Text Citations

When referring to the works of others in an essay or paper you must use what are known as parenthetical, or in-text, citations.

General rules for using **in-text citations**:

* Any time you use a direct quotation from a source *or* a paraphrase of a source's ideas, you must cite it.
* Citations are placed at the end of the sentence **after** the quotation marks and **before** the period (they are part of the sentence).
* In parentheses, type the author's name followed by a space and the relevant page number(s)

EXAMPLE: When Moishe the Beadle is first introduced in the novel he is accepted because he does not bother anyone and is “invisible” (Wiesel 10).

* If the author's name appears in the sentence itself you do not have to include it in the citation, **but the page number(s) should always appear** in the parentheses, not in the text of the sentence.

EXAMPLE: Wiesel first introduces Moishe the Beadle as an “invisible” character who is accepted because he does not bother anyone (10).

* Once the source is cited in a paragraph, if it does not change, then only the page numbers need to change in the remaining citations. If the source changes or goes back and forth, the citations must reflect this. Each paragraph begins anew.

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

## Works Cited Page

When citing the works of others in an essay or paper you must follow up with a Works Cited page.

General rules for creating a **Works Cited page**:

* The Works Cited will be the last page of your paper/essay and its OWN page.
* It should have the same header, font, spacing and margins as the rest of your paper.
* The title of the page will be: Works Cited. The title should be centered, **NOT** underlined, in bold, caps, italics, quotation marks, etc.
* Your sources should be listed in alphabetical order.
* Do not skip spaces between entries.
* Do not use bullets or number the sources
* Indent the second and subsequent lines of citations by 0.5 inches to create a hanging indent.

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

**Works Cited Entry for Print Source**

The proper way to cite a source in print (such as a novel) is below.

Author’s Lastname, Author’s Firstname. Title of Book. City of Publication: Publisher,

Year of Publication. Source type.

Steinbeck, John. *Of Mice and Men*. New York: Penguin, 1993. Print.

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

For any and all other in-text citation and/or Works Cited page questions, to see samples, or for variations of source types (non-print, articles, no author, etc.), visit: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

**Introductory Paragraph**

Your introductory paragraph is one of the most important parts of your essay. It should be focused, written entirely in your own words, and follow the structure outlined below. A SOLID introductory paragraph is **3-6 sentences** long.

*(Sample Essay Prompt: Discuss three events in the novel Night by Elie Wiesel that had major impact on or significance in his life.)*

General format for an **introductory paragraph**:

1. **Hook**: an interesting statement that draws the reader in while subtly introducing the topic of your essay– see examples below**.**
2. **Transition from hook to thesis**: a statement that introduces the text and author you will be discussing and connects to the hook

EXAMPLE:Elie Wiesel accepted the Nobel Peace Price for his novel *Night*, which chronicles his own experiences in the concentration camps of the Holocaust.

1. **Thesis statement**: the central argument of your paper, including your (3) main points

EXAMPLE:During this horrendous period in Wiesel’s life, many events and people had an impact on him including the change in Moishe the Beadle, (argument 2), and (argument 3).

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

**Hook EXAMPLES**

1. **General Statement**:

A history book can offer facts, but a more poignant way to learn about the atrocities that millions of people suffered during the Holocaust is to read a first hand account of someone who actually lived through it.

1. **Quotation** **from notable source/person or novel/character in novel**:

During his acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize, Elie Wiesel said, “…I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.”

1. **Relevant Statistic** (make sure it is accurate):

An estimated 5,962,129 Jewish people unjustly lost their lives, and even more were tortured, during the Holocaust in Europe during World War II.

1. **Historical Fact:**

The Holocaust was governmental persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its supporters. The Nazis came to power in Germany in January 1933 and believed that Germans were "racially superior" to the Jews, who were a threat to the so-called “German racial community.”

**Introductory Paragraph EXAMPLE**

A. Hook

Extreme isolation often brings out the worst in human beings. In William Golding’s novel *Lord of the Flies*, a group of young boys are tested as they struggle to survive alone on a deserted island. Throughout the course of the story many of the boys transform from civilized schoolboys to pure savages; three characters that demonstrate this disturbing change are Ralph, Roger, and Jack.

C. Thesis statement

B. Transition from hook to thesis

C. 3 main points

**Body Paragraphs**

Each body paragraph should be SPECIFIC and rely mostly on YOUR OWN analysis. In order to support your ideas, you should utilize examples and quotations from the texts. A well-supported body paragraph is **6-7** **sentences** long.

General format for a **body paragraph**:

1. **Topic sentence**:a statement thatsummarizes the main idea of the paragraph (should correspond with three main points in thesis)
2. **Examples/support statements**: statements that provide any appropriate and pertinent plot background on the textual evidence you are using
3. **Introduction to quotation and quotation**: a statement that includes a lead-in to your quotation, the quotation itself, and a citation in MLA format

EXAMPLE*:* At the Embassy Ball, Eliza exudes such elegance and grace that the guests in attendance stare at her in awe, while “some of the younger ones at the back stand on their chairs to see” (Shaw 71).

1. **Explanation of quotation**: a statement that elaborates on the textual evidence and its connection to your main idea
2. **Additional examples/support**
3. **Connection to thesis**: a statement that summarizes how the main idea connects to your overall thesis
4. **Transition to next idea**: (only needed in body paragraph #1 and #2) a statement that BRIEFLY previews the next paragraph’s main idea

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

## Body Paragraph EXAMPLE

A. Topic Sentence

## The first event that had a major impact on young Elie was the change in Moishe the Beadle. When Moishe the Beadle is first introduced in the novel he is accepted because he does not bother anyone and is “invisible” (Wiesel 10). He is not invisible to Elie, however, and he becomes a Kabbalah teacher for the youth. They speak and pray for hours on end and Elie even says he “became convinced that Moishe the Beadle would help me enter eternity” (17). Moishe’s impact on Elie forms the foundation for Elie’s spiritual identity. (Follow this format to include two more examples (E), then conclude paragraph by connecting back to thesis (F) and transitioning to next argument (G).)

D. Explanation of Quotation

C. Introduction to Quotation and Quotation

B. Example/ Support Statement

**Concluding Paragraph**

The goal of the concluding paragraph is to summarize your argument and provide your reader with a take-away. Like the introductory paragraph, it should be focused, written entirely in your own words, and follow the structure outlined below. A SOLID concluding paragraph is **5-6 sentences** long.

General format for a **concluding paragraph**:

1. **Reintroduction of text and author\***: a statement that reintroduces the text and author you have discussed and provides a brief summary of the work

EXAMPLE: The novel *Night* tells the true story of Eli Wiesel’s tortured life during the Holocaust, a life filled with significant events and people the impacted him greatly.

1. **Reintroduction of thesis statement\***: a statement that summarizes the central argument of your essay, including your three main points.

EXAMPLE*:* Wiesel learned, for instance, that he was not safe from the horrors of the war from his teacher and friend Moishe the Beadle, (argument 2), and (argument 3).

1. **Restatement of first main point**: a statement that summarizes your first main point and the main examples you used to support it
2. **Restatement of second main point**: a statement that summarizes your second main point and the main examples you used to support it
3. **Restatement of third main point**: a statement that summarizes your third main point and the main examples you used to support it
4. **Evaluative comment**: a statement that extends the topic of the essay and ties back to hook – see examples below.

\*Sentences A and B can be combined depending on the stylistic preference of the writer.

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

**Evaluative Comment EXAMPLES**

1. A history book could never offer the emotion and impact that reading this true eyewitness account of Elie Wiesel gives to the world.
2. Elie Wiesel wrote this novel to keep the promise to himself to never be silent, to never help the oppressor; he wrote this novel to be a voice for the innocent, tortured victims of the Holocaust.
3. This novel is a voice for the almost six million innocent lives lost during the Holocaust, and a lesson for those living in the world today.
4. This novel is the true story of what can happen in a dictatorship run through fear, and the evil of believing one group of people superior to another.

**Concluding Paragraph EXAMPLE**

A. Reintroduction of text and author

The novel *Night* tells the true story of Elie Wiesel’s tortured life during the Holocaust. While enduring the many horrors of this time of his life, Elie was impacted by Moishe the Beadle, (argument 2), and (argument 3). Wiesel learned, for instance, that he was not safe from the horrors of the war from his teacher and friend Moishe the Beadle. (follow this format for restatement of second and third thesis arguments- D and E). Elie Wiesel wrote this novel to keep the promise to himself to never be silent, to never help the oppressor; he wrote this novel to be a voice for the innocent, tortured victims of the Holocaust.

F. Evaluative Comment

C. Restatement of first main point

B. Reintroduction of thesis statement

**5-Paragraph Essay Skeletal Outline**

Use the following skeletal outline as a reference to ensure you are using the correct format and including all of the relevant information in your essay.

Your last name [insert] page #

Your name

Your teacher’s name (ex: Mrs. Jones)

Your course (ex: 9 College Prep English)

The current date (ex: 10 June 2015)

Title

1. Introductory paragraph
2. Hook
3. Transition from Hook to thesis (should mention text and author)
4. Thesis (central argument + three main points you are using to prove it)
5. Body paragraph #1
6. Topic sentence (explains focus of paragraph, should correspond with *first* main point in thesis)
7. Examples/support statement(s)
8. Introduction to quotation and quotation
9. Explanation of quotation
10. Additional examples/support statements
11. Connection back to thesis
12. Transition to second main point
13. Body paragraph #2
14. Topic sentence (explains focus of paragraph, should correspond with *second* main point in thesis)
15. Examples/support statement(s)
16. Introduction to quotation and quotation
17. Explanation of quotation
18. Additional examples/support statements
19. Connection back to thesis
20. Transition to third main point
21. Body paragraph #3
22. Topic sentence (explains focus of paragraph, should correspond with *third* main point in thesis)
23. Examples/support statement(s)
24. Introduction to quotation and quotation
25. Explanation of quotation
26. Additional examples/support statements
27. Connection back to thesis
28. Concluding paragraph
29. Reintroduction of text and author
30. Restatement of thesis
31. Restatement of first main point
32. Restatement of second main point
33. Restatement of third main point
34. Evaluative comment (should tie back to hook)

**Style Tips**

Use the following tips to ensure you are not making any minor mistakes that could cost you points in the ‘Style’ category.

In general, throughout your essay **DO**:

* Use a thesaurus to vary your word choice.
* Vary your sentence structures and lengths.
* Write *specifically* and use the words to express the exact meaning that you want. Words like “bad,” “good,” etc. do not express a specific meaning.
* Choose the proper verb tense. Stick to PRESENT TENSE when you are discussing aspects of a literary work.

EXAMPLE: Cassius *hates* Caesar and *thinks* he is unworthy of the crown.

In general, throughout your essay **DO NOT**:

* Use 1st person (“I”, “me”, “we,” etc.)

EXAMPLE: I think Julius Caesar is the tragic hero because...

* Use 2nd person (“you”)

EXAMPLE: The theme of the short story is you should follow your dreams.

TIP: Simply do a search of the word processing document for first and second person pronouns. For example, search for the word “you” and fix all the occurrences.

* Use contractions
* Use informal language or slang of any kind

## ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

## Academic Language

## In order to strengthen the sophistication and academic nature of an expository essay, as well as to communicate clearly and effectively, it is important to build and utilize an academic vocabulary. The list below is a sampling of terms; a further list, including definitions and sample sentences, can be found in the Pearson textbook “Introductory Unit.”

## Ambiguous Concept Differentiate Interpret

## Appreciate Context Identify Interpretation

## Argument Credible Illuminate Speculate

## Clarify Determine Indicate Verify

## ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

## Transition Words & Phrases

## In order to transition between body paragraphs and increase the flow of ideas throughout your essay, consult the following list of transition words and phrases.

**Sequence:** again, also, and, and then, besides, finally, first...second...third, furthermore, last,

moreover, next, still, too

**Time:** after a bit, after a few days, after a while, afterward, as long as, as soon as, at last, at length, at that time, before, earlier, immediately, in the meantime, in the past, meanwhile, now,

presently, shortly, simultaneously, since, so far, soon, then, thereafter, until, when

**Comparison:** again, also, in the same way, likewise, once more, similarly

**Contrast:** although, but, despite, even though, however, in contrast, in spite of, instead, nevertheless, nonetheless, notwithstanding, on the contrary, on the one hand...on the other hand, regardless, still, though, yet

**Examples:** after all, even, for example, for instance, indeed, in fact, of course, specifically, such as, the following example, to illustrate

**Cause and Effect:** accordingly, as a result, because, consequently, for this purpose, hence, so, then, therefore, thereupon, thus, to this end

**Place:** above, adjacent to, below, beyond, closer to, elsewhere, far, farther on, here, near, nearby, opposite to, there, to the left, to the right

**Concession:** although it is true that, granted that, it may appear that, naturally, of course

**Summary, Repetition, or Conclusion:** as a result, as has been noted, as mentioned earlier, in conclusion, in other words, in short, therefore, to summarize

**Conventions Tips**

Check the following list of **common essay errors** to ensure you are not making any minor mistakes that could cost you points in the ‘Conventions’ category.

*Incorrect spelling*

* Word processing programs have spell checkers built in. Use them! Additionally, if there is a grammar checker, use it but do not assume the program is always correct.

*Sentence fragments*

* A fragmented sentence is missing something and leaves a reader confused.

EXAMPLE: Making his decision quickly.

* Fragments are usually corrected by hooking it up with the sentence before it or after it. EXAMPLE: Making his decision quickly, Jim ordered a dozen red roses for his wife.

*Run-on sentences*

* Sentences qualify as run-ons if there are two or more independent (subject and verb) sentences not joined by a conjunction (and, but, etc.) or correct punctuation (a period or semicolon).

EXAMPLE: “Walt Whitman was a famous nineteenth-century American poet, he was also a beloved citizen of New York City” can be corrected in one of the following three ways:

* Walt Whitman was a famous nineteenth-century American poet, and he was also a beloved citizen of New York City.
* Walt Whitman was a famous nineteenth-century American poet; he was also a beloved citizen of New York City.
* Walt Whitman was a famous nineteenth-century American poet. He was also a beloved citizen of New York City.

*Comma/semicolon use*

* When two compete sentences are joined together by a conjunction (and, or, but, nor, yet, so, or for), place a comma *before* the conjunction.

EXAMPLE: Sarah robbed the bank, and then she went out for a slice of pizza.

* Use a semicolon in place of a period to separate two closely related sentences where the conjunction has been left out.

EXAMPLE: Call me tomorrow; I will give you my answer then.

*Punctuation within quotation marks*

* If the end of the quoted material contains a comma or a period, place the punctuation *within* the quotation marks. If the quoted material contains an exclamation point or question mark, place this punctuation *outside* the quotation marks.

EXAMPLE: My daughter said Jack is “the one.” As her mother, I wanted to make sure Jack was “the one”!

* If the quoted material is dialogue, all punctuation should be contained *within* the quotation marks.

EXAMPLE: She said, “I can’t believe I won the lottery!”

*Parallel structure*

* Sentences must be balanced.

EXAMPLE: “Mary likes hik*ing*, swimm*ing*, and *to ride* a bicycle” is not parallel. To make it parallel you would change it to: “Mary likes hiking, swimming, and bicycling.”

* EXAMPLE: “The production manager was asked to write his report quickly, accurately, and add thorough details” is not parallel. A good rewrite is: “The production manager was asked to write his report quickly, accurately, and thoroughly.”

*Overuse of “to be” verbs and passive voice*

* Think of limiting “to be” verbs (am, are, is, was, were, be, being, been) as completing a jigsaw puzzle. You will need to move around the words to avoid overuse of these verbs. By limiting these verbs, you are forced to use more interesting, active verbs. Active voice is simply a sentence in which the subject performs the action of the verb and the direct object is the goal or the recipient.
* EXAMPLE: “The car was fixed by the mechanic” is in passive voice. To make it active you would change it to: “The mechanic fixed the car.”

*Writing out numbers*

* Spell out numbers one through nine; use numerals for 10 and above.
* To make plurals out of numbers, add *s* only, with no apostrophe (the 1950s).

*There/They’re/Their*

* Use *there* to signify location: “Put the plate there.” Use *they’re* only if you can substitute the words they are: “They’re going to be excited.” Use *their* only when referring to the possession of nouns: “Their cat has fleas.”

*To/Too/Two*

* Use *to* when you mean going towards something: “I am going to the theatre.” Use *too* to mean more than enough or also: “I am too tired,” or “I would like to go, too.” Use *two* when you want to spell the number 2: “He had two pancakes for breakfast.”

*Than/Then*

* Use *than* when you want to make a comparison: “Alex is smarter than I am.” If you are talking about time, choose *then*: “First you separate the eggs; *then* you beat the whites.”

**Grading Rubric**

