

# Essay Writing Cheat Sheet

## Evidence, Thesis, and Analysis

Before even starting to think about writing an essay, you need to understand the following:

Evidence is the foundation of all argument papers. You cannot formulate a thesis until the evidence has been studied and analyzed for its significance. Evidence for argument papers is usually found in primary sources.

Evidence is comprised of: events, places, statistics, facts, names, theories, concepts, anecdotal references, and more. A good starting point to learning evidence is to READ!! You will build these nuts and bolts into something by analyzing them.

### A thesis...

- is your idea that **takes a position** on a topic (IT IS DEBATABLE!).
- is the main idea of your essay.
- **makes a claim or argument** which you will then prove or support throughout the essay with evidence and analysis.
- helps you organize your argument by laying out analytic categories (CONCISE).
- is **supported by evidence** (specific facts that prove your argument is right) and analysis.

### Thesis checklist:

Does your thesis...

- make an argument?
- get the job done in one sentence?
- build a roadmap (sub-points) for your essay?
- fit the evidence you use in your essay?

\*\*\*You hold the *burden of proof*, meaning you must prove that your thesis is correct by *presenting AND analyzing evidence*.

Analysis shows how evidence helps prove your thesis, or main argument. In addition to presenting reliable evidence, you must take it a step further. First, you need to explain the evidence. What does it mean? Second, you must state the significance of your evidence. So what? And third, you must close the loop on your argument. How does this evidence support (substantiate) your thesis?

- Analysis explains your evidence.
- Analysis ties your evidence back to your argument, “completing the loop” (shows how your evidence proves your argument).
- **Words that signal analysis:** as a result, thus, thusly, therefore, hence, consequently, as a consequence, accordingly, then, this shows, so, in this way, in this manner, in this fashion...

## Seven Steps of Synthesis Essay Writing

1. **Read and analyze the claim**
2. **Collect and sort the data needed to answer the question**
  - Make sure your graphic organizer has sub-point categories.
  - Brainstorm a list of factual information within your graphic organizer.
3. **Create your thesis statement**
  - The thesis is your answer to the question. It is the guiding argument of the essay.
  - The thesis must fully address the question, take a position with regard to the question, and provide organizational categories for analysis (2-4 sub-points).
4. **Write the introduction to your essay**
  - OVERVIEW: *taken from the claim* - who, what, when, where
  - Analysis statement: *taken from the claim* – why, how
  - Thesis statement: your answer to the question (as analytical and evaluatory as you can possibly make it, including all sub-points listed briefly)
5. **Write the body of the essay**
  - Each paragraph MUST have a topic sentence (introducing the sub-point for that paragraph and what your argument is about it)
  - Each paragraph must have evidence FROM MULTIPLE SOURCES. This is the necessary ingredient to prove that your thesis is correct. Aim to include at least 3 supporting facts.
  - Each paragraph must have analysis, which explains how your piece(s) of evidence prove your thesis.
  - You can either BLEND YOUR EVIDENCE and ANALYSIS into the SAME SENTENCE, or, you can write ONE EVIDENCE SENTENCED FOLLOWED BY ONE ANALYTIC SENTENCE...and repeat.
  - Each paragraph MUST end with a linking sentence that directs the reader to the next paragraph (it contains your sub-point plus argument about that sub-point for the above paragraph and compares/contrasts it with the next paragraph's sub-point/argument).
6. **Write the conclusion**
  - Start with a “concluding phrase”
  - Restate your thesis statement a bit differently.
  - The conclusion must summarize the main points of the body paragraphs.
  - The conclusion must synthesize the linking sentences.
  - The conclusion must address “so what?” (significance):
    1. End of some trend/movement/idea, etc.
    2. Beginning of some trend/movement/idea, etc.
    3. End of one and beginning of another
    4. Do NOT end on the note that this is the reason we are where we are today!
7. **Proofread your essay**
  - Eliminate grammatical errors and contradictions between the thesis and the body.
  - Try to add in any further details (NAMING specific facts, people, events, phenomena...).

## **Transition and Signal Words for Essays**

\*Always spell out full names first, then use abbreviations or last names only thereafter.\*

### **Sequence and Chronological Order Stems**

After	(the) final	Long after	Soon, soon after
Afterwards	First, first of all	Meanwhile	Some
Ago	Following	Next	Subsequently
Already	For a time	Now	Suddenly
At last	Further, furthermore	Not long after	Then
At the same time		Once	Thereafter
As	Immediately	On (date)	Third
Before	Initially	Preceding	To begin with
During	In the first place	Presently	Today
Eventually	In the meantime	Second, secondly	Until
Even now	Last, lastly	Several	While
Finally	Later	Sometimes	

### **Compare and Contrast Stems**

Although	Even though	Like	Regardless
Also	Equally	Likewise	Same as
As opposed to	important	Neither...nor	Similarly
As well as	However	Nevertheless	Still
But	In comparison	Notwithstanding	Unlike
By comparison	In contrast	On the contrary	Unless
Compared with	In like manner	Not only...but	Whereas
Conversely	In the same way	also	While
Despite	In spite of	On the other	Yet
Different from	Instead of	hand	
Either...or	Just as	Rather than	

### **Cause and Effect Stems**

Accordingly	Consequently	May be due to	So that
As a result	Hence	Nevertheless	Then
As if	In order to	Provided that	Therefore
As though	If...then	Since	Thus
Because	It follows that	So	

### **Emphasis Words**

Besides	Furthermore	Moreover	Of course
Certainly	Indeed	Obviously	

### **Stems for Examples**

Another	First, second, etc...	Namely	That is
For example		Specifically	To illustrate
For instance	In addition	Such as	
Furthermore	Most important	To begin with	

### **Conclusion Words**

As a result	In brief/short	In fact	Thus
Consequently	In other words	On the whole	To summarize
For this reason	It follows that	Therefore	To sum up