

Sample Body Paragraphs about Prof Edelen

... when I got back that first paper and I saw the D- in large red ink, I knew at that moment that Professor Edelen was a serious, tough grader. The man had high standards.

Professor Edelen had such high standards, I believe, because he was a brilliant man, one with an especially impressive memory. For instance, because it was an entry-level class at Indiana University, a Big 10 University, Professor Edelen's Shakespeare class had over 200 students enrolled. He told us, on the first day of class, to memorize our seat numbers and stay in the same seat all semester. We were to include our seat numbers, along with our names, on all papers, quizzes, and tests. At first, this seemed somewhat dehumanizing: I feared he wouldn't know me as "Patrick Clauss"; instead, he'd likely know me as "Patrick Clauss, #165"—or, worse, just "#165" (if he knew me at all). Somehow, however, with his impressive memory, Professor Edelen did in fact know all of our names. I realized that one day when, about three weeks into the semester, I approached him after class with a question about the assigned reading. Several students were in line in front of me. As we each approached him, as he helped each one of us, he began by asking, "Yes, Stacey? How can I help you?" or "You have a question, Patrick?" Another time a few weeks later, two students were more than 15 minutes late to class. As they entered the auditorium and tried to sneak to their seats when his back was turned, Professor Edelen stopped his lecture and announced, "David and Josh, how nice of you to join us. I do hope my class hasn't inconvenienced you this afternoon." How he remembered our names, I'll never know. I do know, though, that the man's memory—with over 200 students in that class—was incredible.

Professor Edelen's incredible memory was demonstrated not only by his ability to know so many students' names but also by his ability to memorize Shakespeare's plays—not just, as far as I could tell, certain passages, but *whole plays* themselves. It was in his class that I first read my favorite of all of Shakespeare's plays, *Hamlet*. *Hamlet* is of course Shakespeare's longest play,

running over five hours long when it's performed in its entirety. Many English teachers, whether they're at the high school or the college level, can likely recite some or many of the more well-known passages. "To be or not to be," for instance, starts one of the most famous soliloquies in the play, a soliloquy that I used to know by heart myself. But knowing a few passages or a handful of soliloquies was not enough for Professor Edelen. As he lectured for 50 minutes each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, Professor Edelen never used any notes. Nor did he use a book, either. He came to class with nothing but his coat and hat! With *Hamlet*, for example, he would move us through the long play, scene by scene or line by line, without consulting any reference materials. I followed along, my book open in front of me, as he'd recite long passages—very rarely getting just one word wrong. At first, I thought perhaps he'd simply memorized the sections he'd planned to talk about in class—a sort of parlor trick to fool students. However, when students would ask questions about different sections of the plays, he would recite those passages as well. Additionally, he knew not only the words themselves but also the acts, the scenes, and the line numbers. To this day, after spending my entire adult life on college campuses, I still haven't met any professor with a memory as incredible as Professor Edelen's.