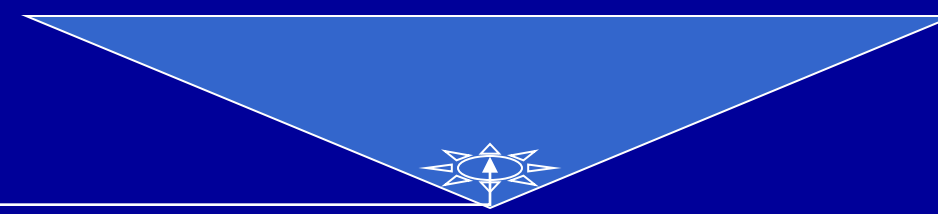
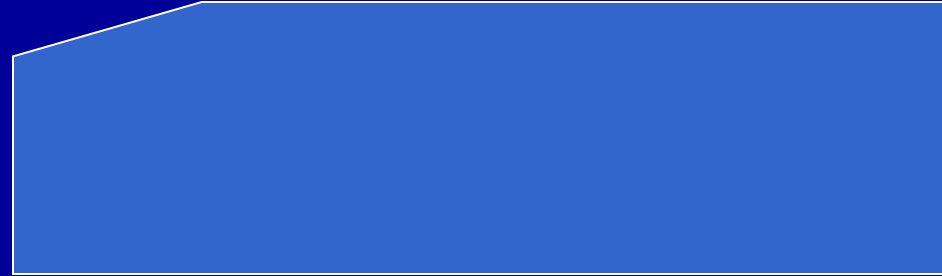


# Response to Literature Essay Writing

Intro. Paragraph  
with thesis  
statement\*



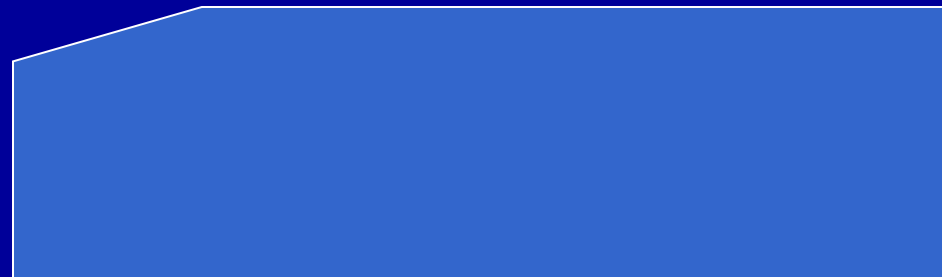
Body Par. #1



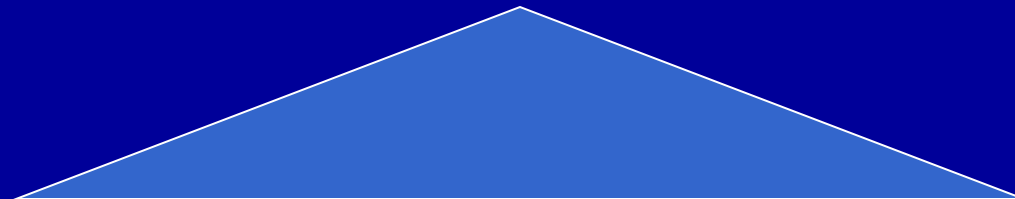
Body Par. #2



Body Par. #3  
(optional)



Concluding  
Paragraph

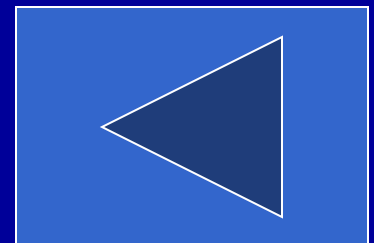


Introductory Paragraph -- Like a funnel, start with a broad connection to the topic and then hone in on your point (thesis).

Start with a “hook.” Mention the title, author and genre (TAG) and add a couple focus sentences that lead to the thesis statement.

The thesis statement is a debatable claim or point you wish to prove.

Diagram



**INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH:** the first paragraph in your essay. It begins creatively in order to catch your reader's interest (HOOK), provides essential background about the literary work, and prepares the reader for your major thesis. The introduction must include the title, author, and genre (TAG) of the work as well as an explanation of the theme to be discussed.

The major thesis goes in this paragraph, usually at the end.

**HOOK (also CREATIVE OPENING):** the beginning sentences of the introduction that catch the reader's interest. Ways of beginning creatively include the following:

- 1) A startling fact or bit of information
- 2) A snatch of dialogue between two characters
- 3) A meaningful quotation (from the work or another source)
- 4) A universal idea
- 5) A rich, vivid description of the setting
- 6) An analogy or metaphor

**TAG** -- acronym for title, author,  
genre

(**Genre** -- tell whether the literature  
selection is a novel, play, short  
story, poem, essay, etc.)

**THESIS STATEMENT:** a statement that provides the subject and overall opinion of your essay.

Intro. Paragraph  
with thesis  
statement\*

Thesis with 3 major reasons



Body Par. #1

Reason #1 discussed in  
this paragraph

Body Par. #2

Reason #2 discussed in  
this paragraph

Body Par. #3  
(optional)

Reason #3 discussed in  
this paragraph

Concluding  
Paragraph

Final thoughts



**BODY:** the support paragraphs of your essay. These paragraphs contain supporting examples (concrete detail) and analysis/explanation (commentary) for your topic sentences.

Each paragraph in the body includes (1) a topic sentence/support thesis, (2) integrated concrete details/examples, (3) commentary/explanation for details/examples, and (4) a concluding sentence.

## Body Paragraphs - two minimum

Begin with a **topic sentence** which supports the major thesis statement from the introductory paragraph.

Be sure to include:

Concrete details (quoted passages or paraphrased facts from the story)

Commentary -- interpretation/elaboration

Concluding sentence -- to sum up or transition to the next paragraph

**TOPIC SENTENCE:** the first sentence of a body paragraph. It identifies one aspect of the major thesis and states a primary reason why the major thesis is true.

## LEAD-IN/TRANSITION:

phrase or sentence that prepares the reader for a concrete detail by introducing the speaker, setting, and/or situation.

**CONCRETE DETAIL:** a specific example from the work of literature used to provide evidence for your topic sentence/support thesis.

Concrete detail can be a combination of paraphrase and direct quotation from the work.

**COMMENTARY:** your explanation and interpretation of the concrete detail. Commentary tells the reader what the author of the text means or how the concrete detail proves the topic sentence and supports the thesis. Commentary may include interpretation, analysis, argument, insight, and/or reflection.

## CONCLUDING SENTENCE/CLINCHER:

last sentence of the body paragraph. It concludes the paragraph by tying the concrete details and commentary back to the topic sentence and/or thesis statement.

# Suggested Outline for Body Paragraphs:

Topic Sentence -- a major **reason** of support for thesis statement.

Lead-in/Transition to Concrete Detail #1  
(sentence or phrase)

Concrete Detail #1 sentence

Commentary/support sentence for CD#1

Commentary/support sentence for CD#1

Lead-in/Transition to Concrete Detail #2  
(sentence or phrase)

Concrete Detail #2 sentence

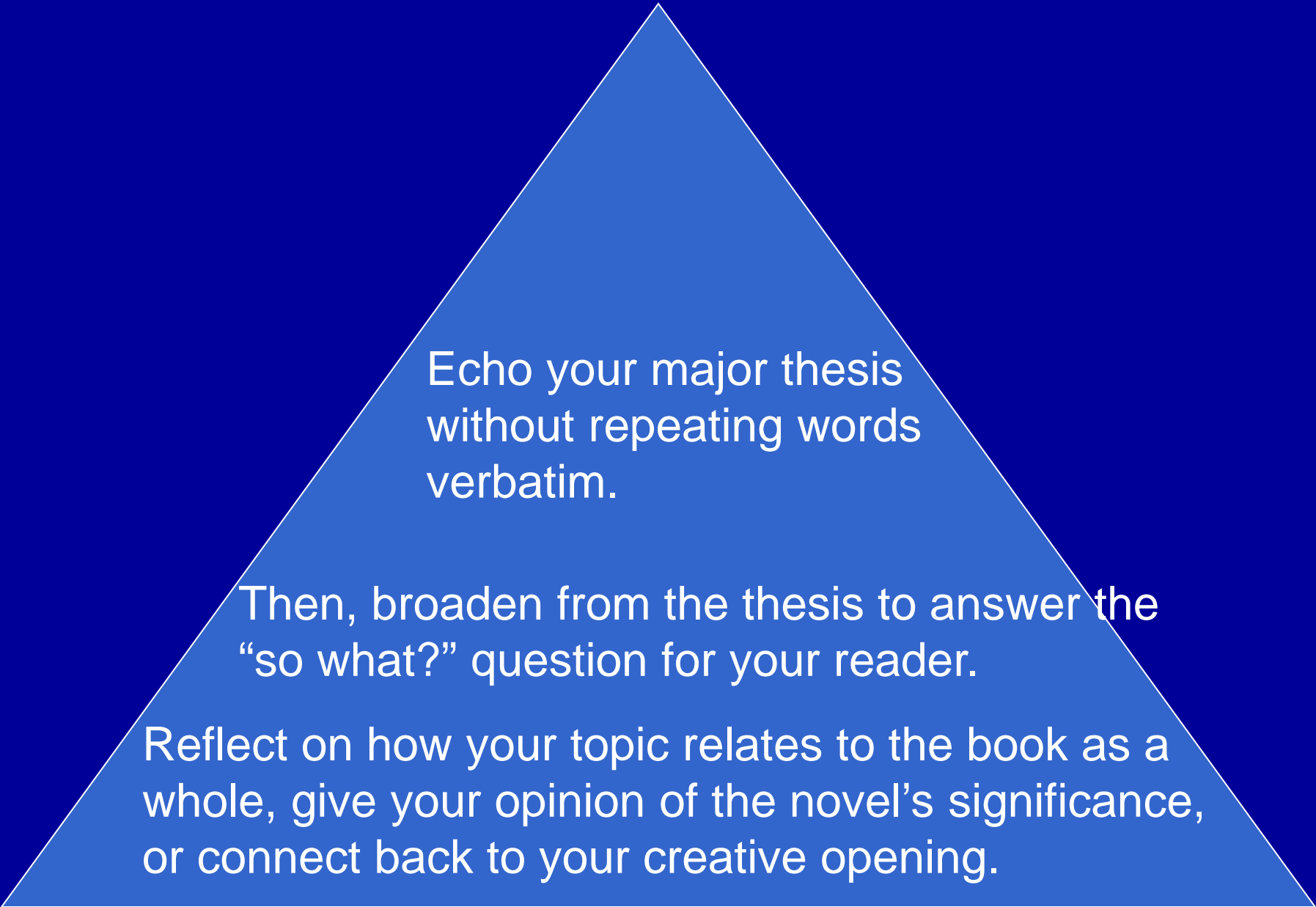
Commentary/support sentence for CD#2

Commentary/support sentence for CD#2

Concluding sentence -- summarizes and transitions to next paragraph



# Concluding Paragraph



Echo your major thesis  
without repeating words  
verbatim.

Then, broaden from the thesis to answer the  
“so what?” question for your reader.

Reflect on how your topic relates to the book as a  
whole, give your opinion of the novel’s significance,  
or connect back to your creative opening.

Intro. Paragraph  
with thesis  
statement\*

Thesis with 3 major reasons



Body Par. #1

Reason #1 discussed in  
this paragraph

Body Par. #2

Reason #2 discussed in  
this paragraph

Body Par. #3  
(optional)

Reason #3 discussed in  
this paragraph

Concluding  
Paragraph

Final thoughts

Credit:

PowerPoint by Anita Mattos; April, 2006

Based in part on:

Poway Unified School District “A Guide to the Literary-Analysis Essay” which was based in part on: Cobb County’s “A Guide to the Research Paper,” Upland High School’s “Student Writer’s Handbook,” and the *MLA Handbook for Writer’s of Research Papers*.