**Paragraph Structure and Technique**

There are several key components that are needed in order to write a successful and grammatically correct paragraph in an essay. Below, I will enumerate each of these, and give a couple of optional sentence types as well – these will be designated by a letter following the number of the section they fall under.

Key Components:

1. Topic Sentence – this sentence clearly denotes the topic the paragraph will be addressing.

1a) **Optional – Background** – this is an optional sentence, which is used to provide further background about the topic.

1. Evidence – this takes the form of a citation or, on occasion, a paraphrase from either the primary text, or a secondary supporting source. Note that direct citations are almost always stronger than using paraphrase. All citations MUST have a set-up phrase preceding them in order to show context.
2. Analysis – this is where you discuss why the citation is relevant to your topic sentence, and how it works in relation to the larger thesis your paper is building on.

3b) **Optional – Additional Analysis**

3c) **Optional – Additional Analysis** – it is always a good idea to provide more than one sentence of analysis for a single piece of evidence. The more in-depth you can look at something, the more complete will be both your analysis and, therefore, your grade.

**Parts 2 and 3 can be repeated in the paragraph. It is never a bad idea to use more than one piece of evidence to support the topic you are writing about.**

1. **Optional – Mini-Conclusion** – this is an opportunity to sum up your evidence in regard to the topic currently under discussion.
2. Transition Sentence – this is a sentence that leads to your next topic sentence. It must do two things: refer to the topic you have just discussed, and refer to your next topic.

Here, then, is a sample paragraph, using *Brave New World* as a model:

1. Soma is a very dangerous drug. **1a)** For example, people who are addicted to it die young. **2) [Note that this is the set-up phrase underlined here]** When Linda returns to London, she begins taking Soma, and the doctor tells John that “she will die in 4-6 months” (182). **3a)** Despite the fact that she will die, Linda wants to take Soma. **3b)** The doctor, who in most circumstances might be expected to save lives, here is actively ending one. **3c)** This further emphasises how little being a mother to John means to Linda. **4)** These two responses – Linda’s and the doctor’s – show how completely reversed are the reactions in “civilised” London from the expectations of a person coming from an emotion-based, family-centric culture such as John, where being a parent or caring for the sick would be the norm, not the exception. **5)** Although the negative aspects of taking Soma are significant, and entire culture bases its well-being and social interactions upon its use – why?