

Name: _____

You
Can
write
brilliant
essays!

A step-by-step guide

Step One: What is the topic asking you to do?

Underline the key words AND make sure you fully understand what you are being asked to do.

The question is directing me to _____



Step Two: How do I answer the question?

You need to brainstorm (write down all you know) about the topic – don't worry too much about how you will use the information, just get something down on paper as a start. Brainstorm below.

You might also need to do some research to help with your brainstorm.

Step Three: How do I organise my ideas?

- You need to look at your brainstorm. Can you link any ideas together? Use different coloured highlighters to group your ideas together.

Step Four: Plan your essay.

- You need to decide what your paragraphs will be about. Remember that each paragraph should cover one point. If you want to introduce a new point – start a new paragraph.

Essay Plan

Introduction

Paragraph One _____

Paragraph Two _____

Paragraph Three _____

Paragraph Four _____

Conclusion

Step Five: Can you support/prove your ideas?

- You need to get examples from the novel which support your paragraphs. If you cannot provide an example, then you should not use that idea.
- You must write the exact page number for where you found a quote and for any referral to an incident.

Step Six: Now it is time to start writing the essay.

- The writing should be the easy part – if you have done enough planning.
- Start by writing the paragraphs from the body of your essay.
- Writing a paragraph is easy if you follow TESS.

Meet TESS

The structure of a paragraph

When you are writing a paragraph remember the following:

Topic sentence – which introduces the topic of the paragraph and links it to the question. It is the **what** of the paragraph.

Explaining sentence – which gives more information about the paragraph topic. It usually explains the **how**.

Specific example – which should be a direct quote or reference to a specific incident in the novel which proves/supports the paragraph point. It is the **where** and **when**.

Summing up sentence – which sums up the paragraph and ensures it is directly linked to the essay question

By following this format you will ensure that each paragraph has 4 sentences. Of course, your paragraphs can be made up of more than 4 sentences. You can have more than one example and more explaining sentences.

For example, your paragraph structure might look like one of the following:

Topic sentence
Explaining Sentence
Explaining Sentence
Specific Example
Explaining Sentence
Summing up sentence

OR

Topic sentence
Explaining Sentence
Specific Example
Explaining Sentence
Explaining Sentence
Specific Example
Summing up sentence

Remember **TESS!** As you draft each paragraph, make sure you are closely following the TESS format



The Introduction

Your introduction is the first thing that will be read. You want to make a good impression, so it is important to get it right. An effective introduction:

- States your approach to the topic
- Outlines the points you will make to support your approach. They should be given in the order that they appear in the essay.
- Make sure you do not give a lot of detail and do not give examples.
- Use the author's name in full when writing about a novel.

The Conclusion

A sound concluding paragraph is vital to a successful essay. It is effective when it:

- Sounds finished
- Links back to the introduction
- Summarises the content of the body of your essay, drawing together the main points
- Gives a final evaluation of the facts/issues/point of view involved
- Has a strong/interesting terminating sentence.
- You **must not** introduce any new points.

Your concluding paragraph is your last shot. It gives the final impression of your treatment of the topic. Make it count!



Technical Matters

- The author's name and the work's title are given in the introduction. You refer to the author's full name once and thereafter refer to them by their last name (Craig Silvey - Silvey)
- The language is formal - I, in my opinion, I think/feel/believe that...are not used.
- "Tired" starters – e.g. this essay will show, in conclusion - are not used
- Topic sentences are used for all body paragraphs
- Connective words are used for all but the first body paragraphs – e.g. "another aspect", "unlike", "in addition", "as well as..."
- Quotations are brief and sparingly used, either incorporated into your writing or, if longer, put on a separate line – avoid block quotations!
- All quotations MUST be referenced. You must be consistent with whatever system you use.
- Paragraphing is used throughout.
- A bibliography is provided after the essay, on a separate page.
- Editing is essential – the essay must be free of spelling, grammatical errors and awkward/clumsy/unclear expression must be avoided. Word processing an essay does not absolve you from proofreading.
- Reread your essay!