

FULBRIGHT WRITING SECTION TABLE OF CONTENTS:

1.0 the clause pre-beginners	pages 1 – 2
1.1 complete sentences pre-beginners	page 3
1.2 coordinate conjunctions pre-beginners	pages 3 – 5
2.0 the subordinate clause beginners	pages 6 – 8
3.0 prepositional phrases level 1	pages 8 – 9
3.1 the paragraph levels 1 and 2	pages 10 – 13
3.2 things to remember while writing all levels	pages 13 – 14
4.0 transitions level 2	pages 15 – 19
4.1 outlines level 2	pages 19 – 22
5.0 essays – introductory paragraphs level 3	pages 22 – 32
5.1 essays – the body paragraph level 3	pages 32 – 36
5.2 essays – the concluding paragraph level 3	pages 36 – 39
6.0 essays – levels 4, 5, & 6	pages 39 – 47

Pre-Beginners

1.0: The Clause

A clause is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb.

Example 1: because I am tired

Example 1 is a group of words, and it contains a subject, “I,” and a verb “am.” It is a clause.

Example 2: I will go to bed.

Example 2 is a group of words, and it contains a subject, “I,” and a verb, “will go.” It is a clause.

Example 3: on the table

Example 3 is a group of words, but it does not contain a subject, and it does not contain a verb. It is not a clause.

Exercise 1: Identify if the groups of words are clauses. If they are clauses, identify the subject and the verb.

1. as soon as I cook dinner
2. the last time we talked
3. in the field over there
4. Joshua met Linda yesterday

5. My friend went to the store
6. the book on the table
7. while we were watching television
8. because he knows her
9. after the movie
10. she is looking for her dog
11. after we left
12. before she went to bed
13. I will leave early
14. I wanted to attend that concert
15. Where the people live
16. when the man ate the cake
17. the teacher is teaching a class

There are two main types of clauses: independent and dependent.

Example 4: she walked to the store after she washed her dishes

Example 4 contains two clauses. Which clause depends on the other clause to make a complete sentence? Think about it. *she walked to the store* is a sentence. You do not need to add any more information to make it a complete thought. Yet, *after she washed her dishes* depends on more information. It is dependent on another clause to make a complete sentence. Therefore, *after she washed her dishes* is the dependent clause, and *she walked to the store* is the independent clause.

Example 5: She walked to the store after she washed her dishes.

Example 5 is a complete sentence that contains two clauses, an independent clause and a dependent clause. Notice that an independent clause is a complete idea, a complete sentence. A dependent clause depends on an independent clause to be complete. In other words, a dependent clause is not a complete sentence. It is not a complete idea.

Exercise 2: Identify if the clause is independent or dependent.

1. they will leave soon
2. while the orchestra is playing
3. because the cat is hungry
4. my friend is leaving
5. the teacher is sick
6. Fredrick likes chocolate cake
7. Amanda and tom are getting married
8. Before they got married
9. Jessica walked around the mall
10. she was looking for a new dress
11. since she wanted to go to a party
12. when the party started
13. while they were looking for their car
14. as soon as I make some tea

Pre-Beginners

1.1 “Complete” Sentences

The idea of a “complete” sentence is misleading. The reason we say, “complete sentence,” is because there IS such a thing as an incomplete sentence. It is a fragment. But complete sentence is redundant. A complete sentence is just a sentence. Although you have just learned the difference between subordinate and independent clauses, you will probably still make simple mistakes by answering questions with fragments.

Example: Why are you attending an English school?

Answer: Because I want to improve my English.

This answer is grammatically incorrect. *Because I want to improve my English* is a fragment, an incomplete sentence.

Example: Why are you attending an English school?

Answer: I’M ATTENDING AN ENGLISH SCHOOL BECAUSE I WANT TO IMPROVE MY ENGLISH.

This answer is also incorrect. A sentence begins with a capital letter. However, all the other letters in the sentence should not be capitalized unless they are proper nouns such as English. Many students fall into the bad habit of capitalizing every letter. Yet, when typing, this is viewed as yelling. You never type: HI, HOW ARE YOU DOING TODAY?

You type: Hi, how are you doing today?

Similarly, it is absolutely incorrect to capitalize every letter when writing. It is a sign of laziness not to bother to distinguish between upper and lower case letters. Furthermore, it tells the reader that you do not know which nouns are to be capitalized and which nouns are to be in lower case.

Pre-Beginners

1.2 Coordinate Conjunctions

Review: Independent clauses are sentences. So, a complete sentence is *Josh took the bus to school*. An incomplete sentence is a fragment: *the bus to school/ because he didn’t have time to walk/ time to walk*.

All three of those examples *the bus to school, because he didn’t have time to walk, time to walk* are fragments because they are incomplete thoughts. *Because he didn’t have time to walk* is a clause, but it is a subordinate clause because of the word “because.”

We know that every sentence must contain an independent clause. Many sentences contain an independent clause and a dependent clause: I always use an umbrella when it rains.

But what about two independent clauses? Is it possible for a sentence to contain two independent clauses? Yes. There are two ways to punctuate two independent clauses in a sentence: the semi colon (;) or a coordinate conjunction.

Let’s focus on coordinate conjunctions. There are seven, and the easiest way to remember them is by using the acronym, FANBOYS: for, and ,nor, but, or, yet, so.

For: For has the same meaning as *because*.

I went to the store because I needed milk.

I went to the store, for I needed milk.

The only difference is that *for* is more formal. It can be used in formal writing or formal speaking such as delivering speeches. Otherwise, *because* or *since* are the better choices.

And: And joins two things in common.

Haley likes Batman, and she likes Superman.

It is okay to use *and* as just a conjunction: *Haley like Batman and Superman*. However, if you want to use *and* as a coordinate conjunction to join two sentences, you must remember both sentences: *Haley likes Batman* (sentence 1), *and she likes Superman* (sentence 2).

Nor: Nor contrasts two ideas. It is the negative version of *and*.

Mike **doesn't** know how to dance, nor **does** he know how to sing.
They **can't** drive, nor **can** they take a bus.

Notice the sentence structure. The first clause is declarative structure. The second clause, though, is question structure: *does he know how to sing/ can they take the bus*.

Also, notice that the first clause's verb is in negative form while the second clause's verb is in the affirmative: *doesn't, does/ can't, can*.

Finally, notice that the verbs are the same in both clauses: *does/ can*.

Nor is easy to use if you remember three rules:

1. The first clause is declarative structure and the second clause is always question structure that uses the same verb as the first clause.
2. The first clause's verb is in negative form while the second clause's verb is in the affirmative
3. The verbs are the same in both clauses

But: But demonstrates contrast.

I like chocolate, but I'm allergic to it.

He studied, but he failed his exam.

Or: Or gives two options.

We can go the movies, or we can stay at home and play games.

Valerie could go to Columbia next year, or she could travel to Spain.

Be careful when you want to use *or* as a coordinate conjunction that combines two sentences. You can write: *We can eat pizza or hamburgers*. This is correct, but you are not joining two sentences.

Yet: Yet is the same as *but*. The only difference is that *yet* is more formal.

So: So represents cause and effect.

I forgot my umbrella, so I got wet.
She saved money, so she can take a nice vacation.

The coordinate conjunction *so* and the subordinate conjunction *so that* are often confused. Remember that *so* is strictly cause and effect while *so that* means the first action was done deliberately in order to obtain a specific result. Also, *so that* contains a modal verb (*can/could, will/would*)

I forgot my umbrella so that I could get wet. (This sentence doesn't make sense. You do not deliberately forget something, and most people do not deliberately get wet from the rain.)

She saved money so that she could take a nice vacation. (This means that the only reason why she saved money was to take a nice vacation.)

She saved money, so she can take a nice vacation. (This means that she can take a nice vacation. Or, if she wants, she can invest in a business. Or, she should could buy a new car. It is just cause and effect. She did not save money specifically to take a vacation.)

Because FANBOYS represent coordinate conjunctions that join independent clauses, it is okay to begin sentences with them.

It is important to demonstrate kindness. People must learn to love something greater than themselves. And this means loving others.

Notice that *and* begins the third sentence. Sometimes, beginning a sentence with a coordinate conjunction can be useful. It can break up long sentences. Other times, it is better not to begin sentences with them. Some professors do not mind this practice, other professors are strongly against it in formal writing. Yet, grammatically, there is nothing wrong with beginning a sentence with a coordinate conjunction.

-NOTE-

The only other way to join two independent clauses is with a semicolon. However, in English, semicolons are not used that often. In a five-paragraph essay, a semicolon might be used two or three times. It is more common to use either FANBOYS or to simply start a new sentence with a period.

Exercise: Use FANBOYS to combine the following sentences.

1. I don't like to vacuum. I don't like to do the dishes.
2. I am studying hard. I want a good grade on my exam.
3. We ate tacos. We ate burritos.
4. You could have milk. You could have juice.
5. We took a taxi. We arrived early.
6. I'm hungry. I haven't eaten all day.
7. Isaac hates music. Isaac loves to dance.
8. The cat jumped the fence. The cat went into the neighbor's yard.
9. She doesn't know how to cook. She doesn't know how to make juice.
10. Jeremy drove to the store. He bought some chips.
11. My bus was late. I was late to class.
12. My school doesn't allow smoking. A lot of students ignore that rule.

Beginners

2.0: The Subordinate Clause

Another name for a dependent clause is subordinate. It is called “subordinate” because it is subordinate to independent clauses. It cannot stand alone as a complete idea. Another reason why a dependent clause is called a subordinate clause is because it begins with a subordinate conjunction. In fact, if a clause begins with a subordinate conjunction, that clause is subordinate. The following is a list of subordinate conjunctions.

after	because	how	if
since	than	even though	which
when	whereas	as soon as	while
although	that	until	unless
so that	wherever	before	though
whenever	whether	where	as

There are many uses for subordinate conjunctions and their clauses. There are three types of subordinate clauses: Adverb, Adjective, and Noun.

Adverb clauses help to explain time, causes and effect, conditions, and contrast:

Time: *When I leave this morning*, I will bring my umbrella.
 She gave Harold a kiss *before he went to school*.
After they ate dinner, they went to a movie.
As soon as she buys a car, she will stop taking the bus.

Cause and Effect:

He was late to work *because he slept late*.
Since they are going to school, they will learn a lot of new things.
 Cindy is learning another language *so that she can get a new job*.
 I will work overtime *as long as you pay me*.

Contrast:

Even though I'm allergic to chocolate, I like to drink chocolate milk.
 Amy loves to walk during rainstorms *whereas most people don't like the rain*.
While we eat fresh vegetables, some people only eat them from cans.
Although Carla studied hard, she failed her exam.

Conditional:

If you continue to ignore the rules, you will not be able to play the game.
Unless they study every night, they will fail their class.

Adjective clauses act as adjectives in sentences.

The man *who is standing in line* is my father.

I like cities *where you can play a lot of sports*.

Franklin only goes to theaters *that have stadium seating*.

Noun Clauses act as nouns in sentences.

I don't know *how to get to the bank*.

Can you tell me *when you last had an examination?*

Why she is crying is a mystery.

All subordinate clauses are fragments of sentences. This means they are incomplete. They require an independent clause to make them complete. We often speak in fragments:

Cecelia: Why are you tired?

Linda: Because I didn't get any sleep.

This type of response is fine for speaking. But when writing, it is important to use complete sentences.

Written Question: Why did they lose the war?

Written Response: Because their army was very small. (This response is incorrect because it is a fragment, a subordinate clause.)

Written Response: They lost the war because their army was very small. (It is correct because this is a complete sentence. It contains an independent clause: *They lost the war*.)

Remember, when writing, your sentences **MUST** contain independent clauses.

Exercise 1: Identify the clauses in the following sentences. Label the independent and dependent (subordinate) clauses.

1. Last night, Anne had dinner with guests before she went to bed.
2. As soon as the movie ended, everyone applauded.
3. What you know about various species is very little.
4. While they were walking home, it started to rain.
5. If you listen to me, you will learn a lot of great information.
6. I don't know how to drive.
7. I left because I don't like parties.
8. Since you eat a lot of junk food, you aren't prepared for the marathon.

Exercise 2: Read the following story from Aesop's Fables: The Shepherd's Boy and write 10 sentences about the story. Your sentences should include subordinate conjunctions. Underline your subordinate clause.

Example: The villagers didn't believe the boy because he was a liar.

There was once a young shepherd boy who tended his sheep at the foot of a mountain near a dark forest. It was very lonely for him all day, so he thought about a plan that would give him a little company and some excitement. He rushed down towards the village calling out "Wolf, Wolf," and the villagers came out to meet him, and some of them stopped with him for a considerable time. This pleased the boy so much that a few days afterwards he tried the same trick, and again the villagers came to his help. But shortly after this a Wolf actually did come out from the forest, and began to worry the sheep, and the boy of course cried out "Wolf, Wolf," still louder than before. But this time the villagers, who had been fooled twice before, thought the boy was again deceiving them, and nobody ran to come to his help. So the wolf made a good meal off the boy's flock, and when the boy complained, the wise man of the village said:

"A liar will not be believed, even when he speaks the truth."

Level 1

3.0 Prepositional Phrases

So, we have learned that sentences are composed of clauses. But...what are clauses composed of? An element of clauses is a phrase. Whereas a clause is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb, and phrase is a group of words that contains either a subject or a verb.

Clause: he left early

Clause: when she studied French

Note that in both clauses, you can identify the subject--he, she-- and the verb--left, studied.

Compare that to these phrases.

Phrase: in the morning

Phrase: sleeping in the car

Both phrases are missing the subject/verb combination. In the morning, has neither a subject nor a verb. Sleeping in the car as a verb but no subject.

You will note that both phrases contain prepositions, and prepositional phrase help add information to the sentence. Here is a list of prepositions:

about	inside	at	out	toward	despite
above	into	before	outside	under	down
across	like	behind	over	underneath	during
after	near	below	past	until	except
against	off	beneath	since	up	for
along	of	beside	through	upon	from

among	on	between	throughout	with	in
around	onto	beyond	by	within	without

Prepositional phrases give more information about a noun or a verb.

Example:

The house with the blue roof is mine. with the blue roof gives us more information about the house, so it is an adjective phrase.

The cat chased after the mouse. After the mouse gives us more information about chase, a verb, so the phrase is an adverb phrase.

The book is on the table. On the table gives us more information about the book. Specifically, the phrase follows the verb “to be.” This means, it is a nominal phrase.

NOTE: It is easy to identify types of phrases by what types of words they follow. If the phrase is after a verb, it is an adverb phrase. If the phrase is after a noun, it is an adjective. EXCEPTION: If the phrase is after a noun AND the verb “to be,” it is a nominal phrase.

Exercise 1: Identify the prepositional phrases in the following sentences.

1. The girl is sitting on the chair.
2. In the afternoon, we will watch a movie.
3. Before you leave, will you please look under the bed for my keys?
4. I parked my car past the building over there.
5. Please check behind the table when you clean.
6. I will be at the movies tomorrow.
7. She is walking toward the park.
8. We are walking down the lane.
9. Josh went up the stairs and into the room.
10. Is your school near your work?

Exercise 2: Label the prepositional phrases as adverbial, adjectival, or nominal.

Level 1

3.1: The Paragraph

There are many types of paragraphs. Paragraphs simply convey information in an organized way. Without paragraphs, we would have lists or just random collection of thoughts:

Pizza is really delicious.

There are many kinds of pizza that I like for instance thin crust, New York style, Chicago crust. And there are a lot of ingredients that go great on pizzas. More people should try pizza.

I learned how to bake pizzas when I was 10. My mom taught me.

One of my favorite pizza places has oven baked pizza and a specialty pizza called The Inferno. I love this place because I love pepperoni, jalapeños, and onions on my pizza.

Pizza is my favorite food.

Paragraphs take the relevant information and put it in a way that makes it easy to read:

Pizza is my favorite food because it is so delicious. There are many types of pizza, and I like all of them. For instance, I love thin crust, New York style, and Chicago crust. My favorite ingredients on a pizza are pepperoni, jalapeños, and onions. I can get these toppings at my favorite pizza place. It has a specialty pizza called The Inferno, and I often eat there. More people should try pizza.

Notice that the sentences *I learned how to bake pizzas when I was 10. My mom taught me.* Are not relevant to the topic, which is just about my love of pizza in general. Notice that there are no spaces that separate the concluding idea of the paragraph. We do not write:

Pizza is my favorite food because it is so delicious. There are many types of pizza, and I like all of them. For instance, I love thin crust, New York style, and Chicago crust. My favorite ingredients to go on a pizza are pepperoni, jalapeños, and onions. I can get these toppings at my favorite pizza place. It has a specialty pizza called The Inferno, and I often eat there.

More people should try pizza.

All of the sentences in a paragraph should follow one another with no extra spaces that separate ideas. Notice also the indent. The indent is that first space made in the first line of a paragraph. We do not write

Pizza is my favorite food because it is so delicious. There are many types of pizza, and I like all of them. For instance, I love thin crust, New York style, and Chicago crust. My favorite ingredients to go on a pizza are pepperoni, jalapeños, and onions. I can get these toppings at my favorite pizza place. It has a specialty pizza called The Inferno, and I often eat there. More people should try pizza.

Instead, we indent that very first line to indicate that this is a paragraph. **All paragraphs must be indented in order to show that they are paragraphs.**

Finally, notice the cohesion. The paragraph begins with a topic sentence. This sentence explains what the paragraph will be about. Then, the following sentences give support. They provide supporting ideas that show the reader why the writer feels that way. And last, it has a concluding sentence. It is one last thought to connect everything together and leave the reader something to think about.

For academic writing, the most common paragraphs and essays are opinion-based, also known as argumentative. This will be our focus: Argumentative paragraphs. They have the same rules as other paragraphs, but because they are academic, they are more formal and have a few more rules.

- Indent
- Topic Sentence
- Supporting Ideas
- Concluding Sentence
- Do not use contractions: don't, can't, won't
- Do not use First- and Second-person pronouns: I, we, our, you, us, me, my

The topic that the writer responds to is called the prompt. A prompt moves the writer to respond to something. It is very important to answer the prompt. Here is an example:

Prompt: What is the best genre?

The best genre is science fiction. This is because science fiction can represent all of the genres and present world-changing ideas. For example, the television show *Firefly* was about humans after a devastating war. The main characters were very similar to cowboys, and each planet they visited had its own culture and rules. In that one science fiction program, viewers were able to think about global issues such as war, moral issues such as situational ethics, and social issues such as individual rights. All of these topics were set in a western-like style. In this way, viewers had a taste of the western genre while still given relevant topics to think about. All of science fiction is like that. One story could have romance, adventure, and horror all on a fantastic landscape while another could have western, historical fiction, and military drama. No other genre is like this. Therefore, science fiction is the best genre out there today.

The topic sentence is clear: The best genre is science fiction.

Next, is an idea that supports that topic: This is because science fiction can represent all of the genres and present world-changing ideas.

Next, there is an example of that idea: For example, the television show *Firefly* was about humans after a devastating war. The main characters were very similar to cowboys, and each planet they visited had its own culture and rules. In that one science fiction program, viewers were able to think about global issues such as war, moral issues such as situational ethics, and social issues such as individual rights. All of these topics were set in a western-like style.

Next, that example is connected to the supporting idea (science fiction can represent all of the genres and present world-changing ideas): In this way, viewers had a taste of the western genre while still given relevant topics to think about.

Another supporting idea: All of science fiction is like that.

Example: One story could have romance, adventure, and horror all on a fantastic landscape while another could have western, historical fiction, and military drama.

Explanation: No other genre is like this

Concluding sentence: Therefore, science fiction is the best genre out there today.

This is the general format for paragraphs.

Topic sentence

Supporting idea

Example

Explanation/Connection to main idea/Analysis of connection

Supporting Idea

Explanation/Connection to main idea/ Analysis of connection

Supporting Idea

Explanation/Connection to main idea/ Analysis of connection

Concluding sentence

You will find that some paragraphs are good with just two supporting ideas while other paragraphs require three supporting ideas. This all depends on how thorough your explanation is. Many students will ask, “How many sentences should my paragraph be?” or “How many words should it be?” In general, 5 sentences is too short. But this does not mean that writing 6 sentences is acceptable. Also, this is not an essay, so writing 20-30 sentences is too long. A good way to look at this is to write enough sentences with enough support to explain your topic sentence. Part of demonstrating your level of English is volume. So if your writing has very little volume—it takes you 20 minutes to write 6 sentences—you have a very low level of English. A university student who is a native English speaker should be able to write 3-4 well-developed paragraphs in 20 minutes.

Let’s look at the sample paragraph again, but this time with an attention-getting sentence.

Prompt: What is the best genre?

“With science fiction, there are endless possibilities,” said Ana Torv, Australian actress. Science fiction is the best genre because, as Torv said, science fiction gives its audience endless possibilities that no other genre can do. It can represent all of the genres and present world-changing ideas. For example, the television show *Firefly* was about humans after a devastating war. The main characters were very similar to cowboys, and each planet they visited had its own culture and rules. In that one science fiction program, viewers were able to think about global issues such as war, moral issues such as situational ethics, and social issues such as individual rights. All of these topics were set in a western-like style. In

this way, viewers had a taste of the western genre while still given relevant topics to think about. All of science fiction is like that. One story could have romance, adventure, and horror all on a fantastic landscape while another could have western, historical fiction, and military drama. No other genre is like this. Therefore, science fiction is the best genre out there today.

Notice the greatest change to the paragraph was simply the first sentence. A quote is used to catch the readers' attention. If you use a quote, you must explain the quote. You cannot simply begin with a quote and then start writing your paragraph without ever mentioning/referring to the quote again. Here is another beginning:

Prompt: What is the best genre?

Space cowboys, galaxy-wide wars, and hundreds of planets all existed inside of one science fiction television show. This is why science fiction is the best genre. It can represent all of the genres and present world-changing ideas. For example, the television show Firefly was about humans after a devastating war. The main characters were very similar to cowboys, and each planet they visited had its own culture and rules. In that one science fiction program, viewers were able to think about global issues such as war, moral issues such as situational ethics, and social issues such as individual rights. All of these topics were set in a western-like style. In this way, viewers had a taste of the western genre while still given relevant topics to think about. All of science fiction is like that. One story could have romance, adventure, and horror all on a fantastic landscape while another could have western, historical fiction, and military drama. No other genre is like this. Therefore, science fiction is the best genre out there today.

Notice, again, that the first sentence grabs the readers' attention. Next is the topic sentence. So you can begin your paragraph in many different ways. Just remember that the content stays the same: Topic sentences, supporting ideas, examples, explanations/connections to supporting ideas, concluding sentence.

3.2: Things to Remember While Writing

Logical Fallacies & Other Terrible Ways to Support Your Opinions

1) Human Rights/ Laws

Rather than give her own opinion, the author will state a preexisting law and/or right. Then, the author will build her argument on this.

Error: Laws change. Principles do not change.

Note the two examples: Prompt: Should women be allowed to vote?

The law clearly states that women cannot vote. Women are not capable of managing the complexities of politics. A woman's place is in the home, and her duty is to her husband and children. (A student writing in 1902)

The law clearly states that both women and men can vote. It is a basic human right. Women are part of society as well, and they must help to decide on political leaders. (A student writing in 2016)

Both of the statements rely on laws of that time for support. The problem is obvious: laws change. So, you cannot say that something is correct/incorrect because it is a law. The second example goes even further by stating that voting is a 'basic human right.' No, it is not. Under certain governments, voting by certain people is a right. But voting in general is not a right as not all governments are democratic.

If you want to use laws or rights to support your opinion, you must explain the principles behind those laws/rights. Why was it established as a law in the first place? Why is freedom a right? You may explain that and then end your line of reasoning by saying that because of those reasons, (topic) is a law.

2) Most people believe...It is believed that...

Using common beliefs, general opinions to support your opinion.

Error: Logical Fallacy of Appeal to Populace

Note the example. Prompt: Should animals be used in scientific research?

Many people agree that animals are co-inhabitants of Earth. This means that they have just as much of a right on this planet as humans do.

The author believes that using animals in scientific research is wrong. To support his opinion, he uses other people's opinions. Remember when you were a child, and you did something stupid? When your parents asked you why, your response was, "Everybody else was doing it." Then your parents would ask you, "If all of your friends jumped off a cliff, would you do the same?" Just because some things are popular doesn't make them right. Don't support your opinion with more opinions.

3) Nowadays/ Currently/ At present

Using an adverb that expresses the present when your statements prove true for every generation.

Error: You are lying.

Note the examples:

Nowadays, many people are concerned with working hard and earning money./ Currently, teenagers are obsessed with sex./ At present, people are really interested in technology.

In all three examples, the author claims that those situations are only true regarding the present. Yet...when have people NOT been concerned with working hard and earning money? When have teenagers NOT been obsessed with sex? When have people NOT been interested in technology? From the time economies were invented, citizens have been concerned with supporting themselves. From the moment teenagers experience the full onslaught of puberty, they are obsessed with sex, and from the very

first time some guy attached wheels to his cart, people have been interested in technology. These are not current situations.

Level 2

4.0: Transitions

Transitions are used to connect ideas in sentences, paragraphs, and essays. Rather than go from one subject to another subject, a transition helps the reader to adjust to a new idea or to additional information. There are specific transition words that you can find in the chart below. However, coordinate and subordinate conjunctions can also be used as transitions. The only difference is how you punctuate them.

Punctuation

Transitions come at the beginning of independent clauses.

- She loves to travel. **However**, her husband does not.
- I do a lot of volunteer work. **Therefore**, I only work three days a week.

Transitions and Transitional phrases are followed by commas.

Coordinate Conjunctions need a comma to connect two independent clauses.

- I drove to Denver, **and** my friend drove back. (I drove to Denver/ My friend drove back)

DO NOT use a comma if you don't have TWO INDEPENDENT CLAUSES.

- I drove to Denver and listened to music on the way there. ('and' is not being used as a coordinate conjunction since there are NOT two independent clauses in that sentence)

Subordinate Conjunctions only use commas when they are at the beginning of a sentence. The comma comes after the entire clause, NOT after the conjunction (unlike transitions).

Although she loves to travel, her husband does not. (comma after the dependent clause)

Jason hates to travel **although** his wife loves to travel. (no comma because the dependent clause is last)

~~Although, she loves to travel her husband does not.~~

Transitional Words & Phrases

Showing consequences or effects	Adding Information	Exemplifying	Generalizing	Emphasizing	Summarizing	Comparison	Contrast
As a result	In addition	For instance	Generally	Above all	In the end	Similarly	However
Consequently	Furthermore	In particular	Generally speaking	Especially	Overall	Likewise	On the other hand
Therefore	Likewise	Specifically	As a rule	In fact	All things considered	In the same way	Regardless

Showing consequences or effects	Adding Information	Exemplifying	Generalizing	Emphasizing	Summarizing	Comparison	Contrast
For this reason	Finally	To illustrate		Of course	All in all		

Examples:

- Emily has been late to work every day this month. As a result, she was fired. (Consequence)

OR Emily has been late to work every day this month; as a result, she was fired.

- Gabe wants to be class president. However, he is very unfriendly. (Contrast)

OR Gabe wants to be class president; however, he is very unfriendly.

- Generally, people want what is best for their children. However, some parents are terrible. (Generalization and Contrast)

OR Generally, people want what is best for their children; however, some parents are terrible.

- It was snowing outside. Despite that, we played soccer. (Comparison)

Adding Information	
also	and
another	beside
first, second, third,...	furthermore
in addition	moreover

- Computers have helped people communicate between great distances. **In addition**, computers have played an important role in understanding higher mathematics.
- Students should not cheat because cheating is unethical. **Another reason** students shouldn't cheat is because they will never learn if they do not do the work themselves.
- **First of all**, humans must respect each other; **second**, they must learn to communicate instead of fighting; and **third**, humans must view peace as the future, not just a goal.
- Higher education is a goal of many because of the careers they can have. **Furthermore**, earning a university degree could mean earning a greater salary.
- Joshua loves competing in triathlons. **Also**, he spends time helping at-risk teenagers to train and become better athletes.

Concluding Ideas

finally	in conclusion
to conclude	to sum up

- I encountered many obstacles when I was looking for a job. **Finally**, after several weeks, I found the perfect place to work.
- Many teachers are concerned with students' motivation. **For example**, some students are not prepared for class and put little effort into their work. Teachers are supposed to help these students learn, but if they are not motivated, teachers can provide little help. **To sum up**, schools must address student apathy.
- **To conclude**, the economy is a machine that must be well-oiled and cared for.

Repeating Information

in fact	in other words
once again	to put it another way

- George hated that movie. **In fact** he said it was the worst movie he had ever seen.
- The candidates did nothing but argue and insult each other. **In other words**, they acted like children.
- Ian failed his first semester at the university. Well, **to put it another way**, he completely wasted his parents' tuition money.

Comparing Ideas

as ... as	in like manner
as if	like
by comparison	likewise
in comparison	similarly

- **Like** his older brother, Patrick is a great singer.
- Government institutions will be closed for the holiday weekend. **Likewise**, many local businesses will be closed as well..

- Jessica prepared well for her exam; **in like manner**, her classmates studied hard and reviewed the material.
- **Compared to** fifty years ago, today's youth is exposed to much more violence and sex in movies.

Contrasting Ideas	
although	but
however	in contrast
in spite of	nevertheless
nonetheless	rather than
though	unlike
yet	regardless

- I am allergic to chocolate. **Nevertheless**, I eat a piece of chocolate candy every so often.
- **Regardless** of the health benefits, I still hate broccoli.
- **Unlike** schools in the southern part of the country, here, students attend school year-round.
- **Although** she studied, Amy still failed her midterm exam.
- I loved that movie; **nonetheless**, I don't want to see it for the third time.
- In spite of the rain, Jeremy went for a walk in the park.
- Despite being sick, Olivia went to work. (*Being* is a gerund, which is a noun.)

NOTE: *In spite of* and *despite* are synonyms and are always followed by a verb NOTE a clause:

- In spite of the fact she woke up late, Nicole was still on time for work.
- Despite the fact she woke up late, Nicole was still on time for work..
- In spite of the sunny day, Adam stayed home playing video games.
- Despite the sunny day, Adam stayed home playing video games.

WRONG USES:

In spite of ~~they went to the store~~, *They went to the store* is a clause. You must use a noun.

Despite ~~of~~ the fact, It is not *despite of*. It is just *despite*.

Preparing an Example

for example	for instance
to illustrate	such as

- Not everyone likes chocolate ice cream. **For example**, my best friend hates anything made from chocolate.
- Spiders are fascinating. **To illustrate**, they are actually classified as animals, and some can grow to the size of a puppy.
- There is more to life than money **such as** love and happiness. NOTE: Do not use a comma with *such as*.

Explaining Why

because	because of
due to	

- **Because of** the rain, we did not go for a walk.
- We did not go for a walk **because** it was raining.
- **Due to** the rain, we did not go for a walk.

NOTE: Because of and due to require just a noun after them. Because requires a clause.

WRONG USES:

- Because of he went to school, He went to school is a clause. You **MUST** use a noun.
- Due to she was angry, She was angry, you **MUST** use a noun.

CORRECT:

- Because of the fact he went to school, he did not have time to play basketball.
- Due to her anger, she yelled at her boyfriend.

Level 2

4.0: Outlines

Your ultimate goal is to write an essay. However, before you can write an essay, you must decide 1) how you are going to write it and 2) what you will write about. Imagine that you are going to take a trip by car. You have decided to drive from Quito, Ecuador to Bogotá, Columbia. Now, one way to take this trip is to

jump into your car and start driving—no map, no GPS, no companion who knows all of the roads and hotels along the way. Or, you could do the responsible thing and plan your trip. You could research the various highways and streets you will need to take. You could identify gas stations and rest stops, hotels and security check points. Basically, you could go into your trip ill-prepared or very prepared.

The same idea works with an essay. Once you are given a prompt, you could simply start writing your essay, or you could carefully plan out what you will say—how you will begin and end—and all of the important points along the way. The first options ends with you running out of time if it is an in-class essay, the second ends with you comfortable, relaxed, and ready to write. This is why we have outlines.

An outline is like a map for your essay. It gives you your beginning—Introductory paragraph, your middle—Body paragraphs, and your end—Concluding paragraphs.

This is a standard outline format:

I. Type of introductory paragraph you will use to get your reader’s attention:

a) Thesis Statement:

II. Topic Sentence of First Body Paragraph:

a) Supporting Idea: _____

b) Supporting Idea: _____

c) Supporting Idea: _____

Connection to T.S. _____

C. S. that connects back to the prompt _____

III. Topic Sentence of Second Body Paragraph:

- a) Supporting Idea: _____
- b) Supporting Idea: _____
- c) Supporting Idea: _____
- Connection to T.S. _____
- C. S. that connects back to the prompt _____

IV. Topic Sentence of Third Body Paragraph:

-
- a) Supporting Idea: _____
 - b) Supporting Idea: _____
 - c) Supporting Idea: _____
 - Connection to T.S. _____
 - C. S. that connects back to the prompt _____

V. Describe how you will connect back to the information in your introductory paragraph and conclude your essay:

Example 1:

I. Introduction: Quote

- a) Thesis Statement: The environment is more important than the economy because humans need the environment to survive, the environment cannot be replaced, and the economy is replaceable.

II. The three essential ingredients for life are food, water, and shelter. The environment produces all three.

- a) How Earth produces food
- b) How Earth produces water
- c) How Earth produces shelter

Connect these ideas to not needing an economy to survive

Concluding sentence explains that the environment is more important than the economy because the economy isn't necessary for survival

III. Furthermore, the environment cannot be replaced

- a) Explain how people cannot create environment
- b) Illustration of replacing things in a home—no 'environment store.'

Connect illustration to T.S.

Conclude with the importance of the environment

IV. Moreover, just as the environment cannot be created, an economy is easily created.

- a) Even children can create an economy

- b) Example of WWII and Japan’s economy compared to Japan’s environment
Connect example to T.S.
Conclude with how the economy is replaceable

- V. Conclusion: Explain the quote further with illustration of inheritance vs. something earned
 - a) Connect illustration to environment vs. economy

Example 2:

I. Introduction: Historical Reference

- a) Thesis Statement: People with criminal backgrounds should be allowed to seek political office because society needs various representatives, people change, and some laws are senseless.

II. A society is not composed of just one element, but of many. This is why people of various backgrounds are required to govern such a society.

- a) Explain how monarchies existed
- b) Give historical references of common people revolting
Connect these ideas to everyone having the right to be represented
Concluding sentence explains that ex-convicts should be represented and therefore allowed to run for office

III. Furthermore, leader and civil rights’ activist Mahatma Gandhi said, “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.”

- a) Explain how the quote connects to people changing
- b) Provide real-life examples of people changing
Connect examples to quote
Conclude with the fact that people change so ex-cons should be allowed to seek political office

IV. Moreover, there are many senseless laws.

- a) Provide real-life examples of laws that have changed
- b) Connect the changing of those laws to the betterment of society
Conclude with how some ex-cons could have been convicted based on senseless laws

V. Conclusion: Go back to Nelson Mandela

- a) Connect his account to the three points mentioned—being represented, changing the world, being convicted because of senseless laws

Remember: Your outlines should not be too detailed. You do not want to waste all of your time planning your essay with very little time to write it. However, your outline should be good enough that someone could use it to write your essay. An outline enables you to remain focused on your thesis statement and answering the question. It also allows you to know exactly where you are going with your essay and how you are going to get there.

Level 3

5.0: Essays—Introductory Paragraphs

An essay is composed of many paragraphs. First is the introductory paragraph. This paragraph introduces the topic and encourages the reader to start thinking about the writer’s point of view. Next are the body

paragraphs. An essay can have just one body paragraph, or two, or three and so on. The number depends either on the assignment or the topic. The most common essay is the five-paragraph essay. This essay contains an introductory paragraph, three body paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph.

Imagine that your essay is a finely prepared meal. Then your introductory paragraph is the appetizer. The body paragraphs are the main course, and the concluding paragraph is the dessert. Sure, you can have a meal without an appetizer or dessert. Just as you can write a paragraph without an introduction or conclusion. But a finely prepared meal, one that has had time and effort go into it, will be complete with all of the courses. Likewise, a finely prepared essay will include an introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion.

An introduction is not the main points of the argument. For example, if you wanted your boss to give you a raise, you would not approach her and say, "I would like a raise." Normally, you would think about the best way to introduce that topic. In other words, you would think about how to lead her to that idea. The same is with an introductory paragraph. It does not contain a topic sentence with supporting ideas and a conclusion. Rather, it begins with something general and then gradually focuses on the topic.

Example 1: Quote (Level 3 Thesis Statement)

Prompt: Which is more important--the environment or the economy?

Earth: A Legacy

"We do not inherit the earth from our parents. We borrow it from our children" (*Native American History*, 206). This Native American proverb appropriately describes the relationship between humans and the earth. There is only one Earth, and it cannot be replaced. Because of this fact, it is important to view the earth as a legacy. One does not treat a legacy with contempt. Rather, one values and appreciates a legacy as something inherited and passed on to future generations. In this way, the earth is both borrowed from one's children and inherited from one's parents. On the other hand, economies are temporary and replaceable. Every country has a national economy. Every city or state within that country has its own economy. Even smaller towns and provinces have their own economies, and families have their own, personal economies. Economies always rise and fall, shrink and expand, change and adapt. Humans do not worry about economies because economies can always be created again and again. However, humans cannot create the environment again. Humans are incapable of generating another Earth. Therefore, the environment is more important than the economy because humans need the environment to survive, the environment cannot be replaced, and the economy is replaceable.

NOTE: Notice that the introductory paragraph began with a quote. There are many ways to begin an introductory paragraph: quotation, illustration/example, anecdote, problem-solution, historical reference, definition. How you begin depends on your topic and what you think will effectively introduce your topic. Note that the author explains the quote. This is important. You must always explain the quotes you use. Notice also that the author just doesn't mention that economies are temporary and replaceable. The author explains what is meant by that. Next, the environment is mentioned. In this way, the author is

focusing on the entire prompt. The prompt does not ask: Is the environment important? No. It asks: Which is more important, the environment or the economy. This means that you must compare and contrast the two to explain why one is more important than the other. Finally, notice the last sentence of the introductory paragraph: *Therefore, the environment is more important than the economy because humans need the environment to survive, the environment cannot be replaced, and the economy is replaceable.* That is the thesis statement. The thesis statement is the topic for the entire essay. It works best at the end of your introductory paragraph. It tells the reader what will be discussed. This specific type of thesis statement is called a 3-point thesis statement. It contains the topics of the three body paragraphs. Also, the thesis statement must directly answer the prompt.

Exercise: Explain why each thesis statement does not answer the prompt.

Prompt: Should couples live together before marriage?

1. Marriage is an important step in a person's life, and a couple should take it seriously.
2. No one needs a piece of paper to say that they love each other, so marriage is not really that important.
3. When a couple lives together before marriage, they learn more about each other and will have a happy marriage.
4. Living together before marriage does not mean that a couple will stay together, and can actually have a negative impact on the marriage.

The best way for a thesis statement to answer the prompt is to repeat words from the prompt:

Couples should live together before marriage because....

Couples should not live together before marriage because...

This is a very simple and easy way to determine whether or not you are answering the question. It does not matter if you are writing at a beginner's level or advanced level. By using the exact language from the prompt, you can be certain to answer the question.

Example 2: Summary (Levels 5 & 6 Thesis Statement)

Prompt: Should animals be used in medical research?

In George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, Major, an old boar about to die, proposed that animals fight for their rights. He said, "Man is the only real enemy we have. Remove Man from the scene, and the root cause of hunger and overwork is abolished forever" (3). The novella goes on to describe a rebellion, not a revolution, for the animals eventually fail in their attempt to be self-governed. By the end of the novel, they are still slaves, and humans are still in control. The irony here is that George Orwell, a human being, gave these animals a voice because animals lack the ability to represent themselves. Humans are often referred to as the only animals that....One must fill in that blank because the list is quite a long one. Humans are the only animals that create art, a sense of morality, establish empires, fight for freedom, have a written language. The list can go on and on. In fact, this is like saying rocket ships are the only

bicycles that require fuel, can take on multiple passengers, escape Earth's atmosphere. The logical conclusion, then, is that humans are no more animals than rocket ships are bicycles. Because of this fact, animals have fewer rights than humans. And until animals demonstrate that they are worthy of the echelon humans have reached on this planet, animals must be used in medical research.

NOTE: You can summarize anything you can remember: books, magazine articles, movies, songs, television shows. Just remember that your reader has not seen or heard what you are describing. Even if it is something that you assume is well-known or that your class has just read, do not treat the material as something your reader knows. You must explain who characters are and what the plot is. Do not just start talking about a story, assuming that everyone is familiar with it.

Example 3: Definition

Prompt: Should sex education be taught in schools? (Levels 5 & 6 Thesis Statement)

Education has been defined as “the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life” (dictionary.com). It stands to reason, then, that sex education will impart general knowledge about sex, develop students' powers of reasoning and judgment regarding sex, and intellectually prepare students for a mature outlook of sex in their lives. Because sex education would provide students with such benefits, it is an important topic. Many teenagers have an immature view of sex due to television, movies, and internet pornography. In order for them to have a healthy, mature view of sexual relationships, students must be taught. And so, sex education must be taught in schools.

Prompt: In the past 100 years, has humanity ultimately improved or gotten worse? (Level 3 Thesis Statement)

Improvement can mean different things to different people. While one person might look at improvement in terms of finances and economy, another person might look at environmental or social improvement. However, if humanity is involved, then one must look at all aspects of improvement because humanity has various aspects. For example, in the last one hundred years, the world has been introduced to personal computers, the internet, and prosthetic limbs. That is certainly an improvement in

technology. On the other hand, in the last one hundred years, there have been two world wars, and at no time on Earth has there not been some sort of military conflict. In the past one hundred years, minorities in various countries have gained more rights. Yet, in the past one hundred years, there have also been ethnic cleansings and the prevalent and wide spread sexual abuse of children. And so, because the human race has struggled with improving itself in so many areas, any growth or advancement must encompass all areas; otherwise, humanity cannot be said to have ultimately advanced. Therefore, because people are still alienated by ethnicity, gender, and morality, humanity has not improved in the past 100 years.

NOTE: You can define a term by using the dictionary and then expanding on that term. Or, you can give your own definition. The important thing is to have a reason for the definition. In the first example, no one argues over the definition of education. Yet, some might not see learning about sex as legitimate education. Therefore, a definition of education as it applies to sex is beneficial. On the other hand, 'improvement' can be ambiguous because there are different ways at looking at improvement. So defining, specifically, what you mean will narrow your focus and help you to explain your argument. So remember two important things with a definition introduction: Do NOT define a term that no one argues about unless you explain it as it relates to something else. DO define an ambiguous term like freedom or advancement or beauty.

Example 4: Anecdote (Levels 5 & 6 Thesis Statement)

Should schools receive money for student scores on standardized tests?

When I was in elementary school, I found standardized tests incredibly boring. Although I was very good at math and English grammar, the concept of taking tests just for the sake of taking tests did not appeal to me. I remember a specific example of when I was in the fifth grade, our teacher spent the entire week explaining to us how important the Iowa State Test was going to be. My reaction was apathy. At that point, I was doing ninth grade math on my own and reading at a high school level. Still, during the exam, I chose random bubbles to fill in. Sometimes, I would make a game of it and fill in patterns for myself. Then, I would finish early and read my book. I was not the only child like this. In fact, whether gifted or struggling, children do not truly see the importance of standardized tests. Teachers and school administrators can promise their students any number of rewards, but the bottom line is that those tests will never be as important to the students as they are to the administration. On the contrary, such tests

determine, not how well students are learning, but how invested schools are in administering standardized tests. Consequently, schools should not receive money for student scores on standardized tests.

NOTE: This is an advanced introductory paragraph. It is one of the few times it is acceptable to use first person pronouns. An anecdote-style intro can be a personal anecdote or a anecdote about another person. It is different from an Illustration/Example because it is a real life even that happened to the writer or to someone else.

Example 5:Historical Reference (Level 3 Thesis Statement)

Prompt: Should citizens with criminal records be allowed to seek political office?

On November 7, 1962, Nelson Mandela was sentenced to five years in prison for leaving South Africa without proper documentation. This was just the start of decades-long imprisonment due to a corrupt government. On February 11, 1990, Mandela was released from prison, and in 1994, Nelson Mandela, revolutionary, philanthropist, and former criminal became South Africa's first black president. Many people would agree that Mandela has been an inspiration to human rights activists all over the world. And if anyone asked if Mandela should have been named president, most people would agree that he should have. This was a wise decision. Mandela's example, as well as others, show that just because someone is a former criminal does not mean that person should be prohibited from helping his people. In fact, that ex-convict could have many beneficial qualities needed to govern a society. Consequently, people with criminal backgrounds should be allowed to seek political office because society needs various representatives, people change, and some laws are senseless

NOTE: When you begin with an historical reference, **begin** with an historical reference. There is no need to introduce your introduction. For example, do not tell the reader: There have been many terrible wars in which noncombatants died. Rather, **show** the reader: During World War I, an estimated seven million civilians lost their lives. Showing the reader with an actual, historical event is much more effective than simply talking about some random event.

Example 6: Example/Illustration (Levels 5 & 6 Thesis Statement)

Prompt: Do violent video games make people more violent in real life?

If a teenager asked his parents to buy a game depicting graphic acts of sex, his parents would most likely tell him no. The teen could then explain that, as he matures into adulthood, his hormones are going crazy. He is often aroused by even seemingly innocuous things, and playing sexually-themed video games could help him tame these urges. He could perform the lewd acts he has daydreamed about by having his avatar engage in them. Most sane parents would refute such arguments. In fact, dwelling on the very thing one is trying to control leads to one acting it out. Furthermore, the more one sees ‘shocking’ images, the more one becomes desensitized to them. There is a well-known adage: It is only kinky the first time. The same could be said with violence: It is only savage the first time. This is because dwelling on violent acts causes a person to act out such acts and become desensitized to them. Therefore, violent video games make people more violent in real life.

NOTE: Examples and illustrations are very helpful in in-class writing. You do not need to research anything or quote anything. You only need to think of a fitting illustration to connect to your topic.

Example 7: Problem/Solution (Level 3 Thesis Statement)

Prompt: Should Ecuador have the death penalty?

The 2015 crime and safety report published by the United States Bureau of Diplomatic Security had this to say about Ecuador: “Crime is a severe problem in Ecuador. Very low rates of apprehension and conviction of criminals contribute to Ecuador’s high crime rate.” The report goes on to say that “kidnappings and sexual assault are a very real threat.” Indeed, Ecuador is facing a very serious problem. The crime rate impacts the welfare of its citizens—law-abiding citizens face the threat of criminal activity every day and are constantly concerned for their own safety as well as their families. The prevalence of crime also has a negative effect on Ecuador’s economy since many tourists must weigh the beauty and culture of Ecuador against the very real danger of being kidnapped or sexually assaulted. As highlighted by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, the impetus of this problem lies in the “low rates of apprehension and conviction of its criminals.” The solution, then, is simple. When life and death are on the line,

people—both law enforcement and would-be criminals—treat situations more seriously. If police knew that their convictions would lead to such a severe punishment as death, they would pursue criminals more fervently, and were criminals to understand that their activities would lead, not to a few years in prison, but to execution, they would be more hesitant to follow through with crimes. Therefore, to improve the justice system, protect citizens, and increase tourism, Ecuador must have the death penalty.

NOTE: If you do not think that Ecuador should have the death penalty, you cannot use a problem/solution introductory paragraph. With problem/solution, your thesis statement **MUST** be the solution to the question. If it is not, you will not answer the question. For example, let's say that, instead of the death penalty, you believe Ecuador should work on rehabilitation of criminals, a stronger justice system, and a better trained police force. That's fine. And those ideas can certainly go into your concluding paragraph. But notice what your thesis would look like if you chose problem/solution for that prompt:

Thesis Statement: And so, rather than the death penalty, the solution is for Ecuador to work on rehabilitation of criminals, a stronger justice system, and a better trained police force.

With this thesis statement, each body paragraph will focus on rehabilitating criminals, gaining a stronger justice system, and having a better trained police force. What happened to the death penalty? If you disagree with the death penalty, your focus must be on **WHY** the death penalty is not good for Ecuador. Each body paragraph must focus on why Ecuador should not have the death penalty, **NOT** what should Ecuador do instead. So save problem/solution for when your thesis statement is the solution.

Each introductory paragraph goes from a general idea to a more specific one. Each introductory paragraph leads the reader to start thinking about the thesis statement. Note: Your reader should already be thinking about your thesis statement before he gets to your thesis statement. It should not be a surprise.

Prompt: Should animals be used in scientific research?

Bad Example:

Some people say that experimenting on animals is wrong. This is because animals have feelings, too. Other people think that animal experimentation is okay because humans have gotten a lot of uses from this research. For example, many medicines have come from animal research. Although most people disagree with animal experimentation, scientists should keep doing it. Using animals in research is needed because it can cure diseases, prevent diseases, and give humans a way to test new medicine.

There are several things wrong with this introduction. First, the author's opinion is not seen until the thesis statement. Beginning with the opposition does not help, especially when you don't really contradict the opposition. The author doesn't lead the reader to the idea that animals should be used in research. Rather, it is like saying: Some people like vanilla ice cream. Other people like chocolate ice cream. Chocolate ice cream is the best. This does nothing to make the reader think. And finally, the worse mistake is the thesis statement. The thesis statement does not answer the question. The prompt isn't: Do humans need to use animals in scientific research? The prompt is: Should animals be used in scientific research. People might feel they need to do something, but it doesn't mean that they should.

Example: I need to eat fewer than 900 calories a day to become a model. This doesn't mean you should. That's an unhealthy lifestyle.

We need to burn fossil fuels in order to grow industries. This doesn't mean we should. In fact, many scientists believe we should be looking for alternate fuel sources.

Remember: Your introductory paragraph should not be the longest paragraph in your essay. However, it must be relevant. Take your time and decide which type of introductory paragraph will grab your reader's attention and make him think about your thesis statement.

Things to remember:

Terrible Ways to Introduce Your Topic

1) The 'Water is Wet.' When you don't really know how to start your essay, you begin with something completely obvious.

Contrast two examples of stating the obvious.

Example: Slavery was one of the greatest tragedies in American history. There were many different aspects of slavery. Each created different kinds of problems for enslaved people.

Rather than analyzing a quite obvious statement, "Slavery was one of the greatest tragedies in American history," the author continues with even more obvious statements. The first three sentences of that essay say absolutely nothing. They do not make the reader think, and they certainly do not make the reader analyze the tragedy of slavery.

Example: Death affects everyone around the world regardless of race, nationality, or gender. It has often been called 'the great equalizer' because there are no lines death will not cross. A person could be wealthy and in good health, poor and sick, young, old, depressed or in the happiest moments of his life. Death does not care.

In this introduction, the author states something that everyone knows, but there is a reason for it. The author is analyzing the ubiquitous nature of death and making the reader do so as well.

➤ **Do not state the obvious to take up space. Make your sentences mean something.**

2) The Restated Question Introduction

Prompt: Should all countries open their borders and remove the visa process?

Example: Should countries open their borders? This is a question many people ask.

OR

The visa process can be very long and expensive. It requires not only time and effort but patience since applicants are often rejected or asked for more and more information. Therefore, should countries open their borders and remove the visa process?

Repeating the question that is asked in the prompt is very, very weak. The reader already knows the prompt's question. And even if she didn't, she should be able to tell what question the author is answering

simply by the thesis statement. In fact, any questions in an introduction and/or essay often weaken that essay. This is because the purpose of your essay is to persuade the reader of your opinion. You are presenting a strong case. Imagine a woman accusing her boyfriend of cheating. She says: “Were you dancing at that club Saturday night? Were you with my sister at that club?”

Suppose he responds this way: “Was I at that club Saturday night? Are you asking if I was dancing with your sister?”

Rather than asking her the same questions, why doesn't he simply answer them? Because by doing so, he's thinking of a good lie to give.

In the same way, when an author uses questions, it's as if that author doesn't know what to say and is trying to fill space.

- **Questions can be used effectively in essays, but it requires skill. Before asking a question, try a statement.**

3) The Useless Definition

Consider the example:

Webster's dictionary defines peace as “the absence of hostilities such as war.” Yet, it is possible for one to not be at war and still not have peace. In 2012, over three million children died in Niger due to malnutrition. Niger has not been at war, has not had ‘hostilities,’ for over fifty years. Nevertheless, no one would look upon this country of dead and dying children and claim that it had peace. In this way, then, peace is not simply the absence of hostilities. More than that, peace must be defined as the absence of pain, of suffering, and of hopelessness.

OR

Webster's dictionary defines advancement as “progress or improvement.” So if a student receives better grades on exams and quizzes but is still failing to turn in homework on time and to participate in class, one must look at all of these areas to determine if the student, overall, has improved. In the same way, when one considers the advancement of the human race, one must consider the main aspects of humanity all together to determine if humans have actually improved.

These two examples build on definitions, and they define terms that can be ambiguous. Peace or advancement to one person might mean something else to another. Also, the first example shows that the author furthered the dictionary's definition by providing one of his own. An effective use of defining a term is to define it oneself. The second example provided further explanation by way of an illustration to focus on a key aspect of that definition.

Contrast those examples with the following:

Example: Webster's dictionary defines slavery as “the state of being a slave,” as “the practice of owning slaves,” and as “a condition of hard work and subjection.” So it is important to understand that no one would want to be a slave. Yet, some people are slaves to technology.

In this last example, the author 1) defines a term that really isn't argued over and 2) provides no reason for defining the term. A better way to have begun this introduction would have been by using an example or illustration that showed an individual behaving as a slave toward her technology.

- **Do not define a term that requires little analysis. Do your best to define the term yourself and/or analyze and explain the dictionary’s meaning.**

4) The ‘Throughout history’ Introduction.

Example: Since the dawn of man, slavery has been a problem in human history.

OR

Throughout history, humans have fought wars.

OR

Since the beginnings of humans, men have craved power.

Really? Slavery has been a problem? Interesting. Humans have fought wars throughout their history? Fascinating! Men have always craved power? Wow! And...has water always been wet?

- **Unless you are prepared to analyze the importance of the continuity of events, do not use them. These types of introductions are incredibly weak and meaningless.**

Level 3

5.1: Essays- The body paragraph

So, as your essay is a finely prepared meal, the body paragraphs are the main course. This means that they require the most amount of work. You know how to write a paragraph: topic sentence, supporting ideas, examples/illustrations, concluding sentence. The body paragraph is written exactly the same. The only difference is that topic sentence relates to your thesis statement, and the concluding sentence refers back to the prompt.

Example 1:

Earth: A Legacy

“We do not inherit the earth from our parents. We borrow it from our children” (*Native American History*, 206). This Native American proverb appropriately describes the relationship between humans and the earth. There is only one Earth, and it cannot be replaced. Because of this fact, it is important to view the earth as a legacy. One does not treat a legacy with contempt. Rather, one values and appreciates a legacy as something inherited and passed on to future generations. In this way, the earth is both borrowed from one’s children and inherited from one’s parents. On the other hand, economies are temporary and replaceable. Every country has a national economy. Every city or state within that country has its own economy. Even smaller towns and provinces have their own economies, and families have their own, personal economies. Economies always rise and fall, shrink and expand, change and adapt.

Humans do not worry about economies because economies can always be created again and again. However, humans cannot create the environment again. Humans are incapable of generating another Earth. Therefore, the environment is more important than the economy because humans need the environment to survive, the environment cannot be replaced, and the economy is replaceable.

The three essential ingredients for life are food, water, and shelter. The environment produces all three. “The world already produces more than 1 ½ times enough food to feed everyone on the planet. That’s enough to feed 10 billion people, the population peak we expect by 2050” (Gimenez, *Nature*). This information means that food shortages are caused by poor management of Earth’s resources, not a lack of them. Furthermore, the earth provides plenty of fresh water for its inhabitants. As for shelter, the ozone layer protects people from radiation, and there is enough raw material for people to use for protection from the elements. On the other hand, people do not require money to survive, nor do they require trade or other forms of economy. There have been numerous cases of someone dying from asphyxiation, lack of oxygen, starvation, lack of food, or exposure, lack of shelter. There has never been a case of someone dying for lack of economy. One might say that money is needed to buy food, water, and shelter. But this does not mean money is necessary. It simply means that humans do not manage the earth’s resources well, and they withhold such resources from people who need them. People do not die because they do not have money. They die because they do not have food. In this way, then, while the environment is necessary for the human race’s survival, the economy is not. Thus, the economy is less important than the environment.

Note how the body paragraph focuses on one part of the thesis statement: humans need the environment to survive. The entire paragraph supports that part of the thesis statement. It provides supporting ideas and examples to strengthen the argument. The concluding sentence connects back to the topic by restating the author’s position. This form of repetition is important. Because the prompt asks about the environment and the economy, it is important to use environment and economy. Notice that the author also uses Earth. That is it. Do not spend half of your time trying to come up with synonyms. It is okay to stay with just 1-2 words that describe what you are talking about.

Yet, what if your thesis statement does not have three points? How do you develop your body paragraph? Note the following example.

Example 2:

Lying: The Arrogant and Cowardly Way of Life

“I want the truth!” Lieutenant Kaffee demands.

Colonel Jessup responds, “You can’t handle the truth!”

In 1992's *A Few Good Men*, Jack Nicholson's character, Colonel Nathan Jessup, exclaims the very principle behind why people do not feel that the truth is essential: arrogance. People may offer many reasons for lying. Some say that it is to protect the ones they love. Others believe that lying is essential to maintain social order. Still others claim that lying is at the very fabric of the human condition and that no human can really avoid lying. Yet, regardless of whether or not a human can avoid lying or believes that it is necessary to do so, lying requires arrogance. For, it is arrogant to believe that other people are incapable of 'handling' the truth as if the liar is the only person mature and intelligent enough to see reality for what it is. It is arrogant to believe that robbing someone of the dignity of the truth is in that person's best interests. And it is arrogant to believe that society, as a whole, could not function with accurate perceptions of reality. Yes, the liar takes it upon herself to declare what people can and cannot know, and in doing so, she believes that she is somehow benefiting society. Yet, lying is merely a crutch used by cowards. It is never essential. Rather than weaving the very fabric of the human condition, lying destroys it.

One reason given for the necessity of the lie is for the benefit of children. People often say that children need to believe in something, that they require imagination. The foundation of this argument is misleading. Most children live in a world of pretend, and it is quite difficult to find a child who does not use his imagination. Still, parents believe that telling children Santa Clause is real, or the Easter Bunny will visit them, helps children to maintain their innocence. So parents lie. They spend years creating the pretense that Santa has visited the children. Then, when their children are old enough to realize that there is no Santa Clause, they have entered one of the first stages of adulthood. Parents are basically saying that to become an adult, one must stop trusting one's parents. The two people whom that child should depend on most in the world are not to be trusted. And if that child's parents have a religious belief, the child might find it confusing to understand the difference between faith and temporary fiction. Furthermore, how does a parent explain to his child that Santa apparently loves children from wealthy families more? That can be the only conclusion when children show their Christmas gifts to one another, and one child's family could afford a few nice pieces of clothing while another child's family bought for him the latest electronic devices. If anything, belief in Santa corrupts a child's imagination. For most children would imagine a world where everyone received anything they wanted, a world without disparity and social class. By maintaining the pretense of Santa, however, parents are basically telling their children that even in the realm of fantasy, poor people receive very little. In this way, lying to

one's children is far from essential. Rather, it is really a demonstration of arrogance, arrogantly believing that adults are free to manipulate children's trust and create for them a rite of passage that involves unraveling the lies told to them.

Notice in this example, the thesis statement is sophisticated: *Yet, lying is merely a crutch used by cowards.* The author could have written: Lying is merely a crutch used by coward, and it is never essential. But the sentences have more impact as individual sentences rather than being joined together. Sometimes, it is okay to separate your thesis statement into two sentences to make your assertion simpler. Notice, too, that the body paragraph focuses on one aspect of why people lie. This was mentioned in the introductory paragraph. So even if you don't have three points in your thesis statement, you can still focus your body paragraph. You bring out a part of your thesis statement in your body paragraphs.

Example 3:

From Prison Cells to Oval Offices

On November 7, 1962, Nelson Mandela was sentenced to five years in prison for leaving South Africa without proper documentation. This was just the start of decades-long imprisonment due to a corrupt government. On February 11, 1990, Mandela was released from prison, and in 1994, Nelson Mandela, revolutionary, philanthropist, and former criminal became South Africa's first black president. Many people would agree that Mandela has been an inspiration to human rights activists all over the world. And if anyone asked if Mandela should have been named president, most people would agree that he should have. This was a wise decision. Mandela's example, as well as others, show that just because someone is a former criminal does not mean that person should be prohibited from helping his people. In fact, that ex-convict could have many beneficial qualities needed to govern a society. Consequently, people with criminal backgrounds should be allowed to seek political office because society needs various representatives, people change, and some laws are senseless.

A society is not composed of just one element, but of many. This is why people of various backgrounds are required to govern such a society. For centuries, many countries held onto monarchies, rule by king or queen. These governments produced injustice and corruption on such a large scale that many revolutions occurred because the common people did not want to be treated as less-than-human by

the nobility. The Hasmonean Revolt, the French Revolution, and the Revolutionary War are all examples of a majority of people being underrepresented. In today's society, most countries have replaced monarchies with democracies that guarantee equal representation for citizens regardless of citizens' nobility, gender, skin color, religion or any other segregating demographic. Because of this, criminals, too, should be represented. When people go to prison, they are removed from society. But once these people reenter society, they have reentered society. These ex-convicts are now a part of a demographic that should, by all rights of a democratic government, be represented. Therefore, it would be unjust in a democratic society to discriminate against its own members, former criminals, by not allowing them to seek political office.

Level 3

5.2: Essays—The Concluding Paragraph

So you have eaten a delicious appetizer, enjoyed a savory meal, and now you are ready for dessert. Imagine if the waiter brought you pieces of your earlier meal—a piece of a potato, a few carrots, a slice of beef. Wouldn't you think there was something wrong? Dessert is light and refreshing and new. It is not pieces from your left over meal. In the same way, your concluding paragraph should be light and refreshing. It should not just be a summary of what you have already written. The best way to do this is to connect your concluding paragraph to your introductory paragraph. This way, you will make your essay come full circle. So if you began with an example, end by connecting back to that example. Or, if you began with a definition, go back to that definition. Explain what the word is not. Provoke your reader to think about your topic from a different perspective. You do not add any more support. You are not giving our reader new information in terms of your argument. Instead, you are giving them a new way to look at your argument by connecting back to your introductory paragraph. Note the following introduction and concluding paragraphs.

Introduction:

“We do not inherit the earth from our parents. We borrow it from our children” (*Native American History*, 206). This Native American proverb aptly describes the relationship between humans and the earth. There is only one Earth, and it cannot be replaced. Because of this fact, it is important to view the earth as a legacy. One does not treat a legacy with contempt. Rather, one values and appreciates a legacy as something inherited and passed on to future generations. In this way, the earth is both borrowed from one's children and inherited from one's parents. On the other hand, economies are temporary and replaceable. Every country has a national economy. Every city or state within that country has its own

economy. Even smaller towns and provinces have their own economies, and families have their own, personal economies. Economies always rise and fall, shrink and expand, change and adapt. Humans do not worry about economies because economies can always be created again and again. However, humans cannot create the environment again. Humans are incapable of generating another Earth. Therefore, the environment is more important than the economy because humans need the environment to survive, the environment cannot be replaced, and the economy is replaceable.

Conclusion:

When someone is familiar with something, that person often takes the familiar thing for granted, like an inheritance. An inheritance is something passed on from generation to generation. The recipient did not have to work for it. If a person inherits one billion dollars, she is not going to reflect about the long, hard hours it took to earn such a fortune. Instead, she is simply going to be happy that she has received such a generous sum from her parents. On the other hand, when something is borrowed, a person takes great care of that item because she knows that that item will eventually need to be returned. The same can be said about the environment. It has always been a part of humanity, like an inheritance, and humans have not had to work for it. While people might search for great fortunes or struggle to earn enough money to support their families, they never need to wonder where their next breath of air is coming from. However, people forget that future generations must use this planet as well, and so, rather than having inherited the earth, the earth has simply been borrowed from those future generations. Therefore, the earth is a precious gift the next generation has lent the current one, and it must be returned. Thus, the environment is and always will be more important than the economy.

Introduction:

On November 7, 1962, Nelson Mandela was sentenced to five years in prison for leaving South Africa without proper documentation. This was just the start of decades-long imprisonment due to a corrupt government. On February 11, 1990, Mandela was released from prison, and in 1994, Nelson Mandela, revolutionary, philanthropist, and former criminal became South Africa's first black president. Many people would agree that Mandela has been an inspiration to human rights activists all over the world. And if anyone asked if Mandela should have been named president, most people would agree that he should have. This was a wise decision. Mandela's example, as well as others, show that just because someone is a former criminal does not mean that person should be prohibited from helping his people. In

fact, that ex-convict could have many beneficial qualities needed to govern a society. Consequently, people with criminal backgrounds should be allowed to seek political office because society needs various representatives, people change, and some laws are senseless.

Conclusion:

Nelson Mandela fought against a cruel, biased system. He was subjected to hatred and mistreatment simply because of the color of his skin. Although he was a citizen, a valid member of South African society, bigots did not want Mandela to voice his opinions of democracy. As Mandela fought the system, he changed from a criminal in the eyes of a corrupt government to a martyr in the eyes of the people he fought for. And if he had been denied political office, South Africa might not have made the changes necessary to dispose of senseless, unjust laws. Consequently, Mandela became the change he wished to see in the world. Any person who would want to deny a person of that, former criminal or not, is unjust.

Introduction:

“I want the truth!” Lieutenant Kaffee demands.

Colonel Jessup responds, “You can’t handle the truth!”

In 1992’s *A Few Good Men*, Jack Nicholson’s character, Colonel Nathan Jessup, exclaims the very principle behind why people do not feel that the truth is essential: arrogance. People may offer many reasons for lying. Some say that it is to protect the ones they love. Others believe that lying is essential to maintain social order. Still others claim that lying is at the very fabric of the human condition and that no human can really avoid lying. Yet, regardless of whether or not a human can avoid lying or believes that it is necessary to do so, lying requires arrogance. For, it is arrogant to believe that other people are incapable of ‘handling’ the truth as if the liar is the only person mature and intelligent enough to see reality for what it is. It is arrogant to believe that robbing someone of the dignity of the truth is in that person’s best interests. And it is arrogant to believe that society, as a whole, could not function with accurate perceptions of reality. Yes, the liar takes it upon herself to declare what people can and cannot know, and in doing so, she believes that she is somehow benefiting society. Yet, lying is merely a crutch used by cowards. It is never essential. Rather than weaving the very fabric of the human condition, lying destroys it.

Conclusion:

In the film, *A Few Good Men*, an officer orders the death of one of his lieutenants because he claims that it is a matter of national security. Basically, that murdered marine had been considered ‘weak’ and ‘sloppy’ in terms of carrying out his assignments. Rather than following protocol, Jack Nicholson’s character orders a ‘Code Red,’ which is a secret order for those under his command to kill one of their fellow marines. These actions lead to a trial and ultimately the arrest of the colonel for taking matters into his own hands. He essentially believed that he was above the law, that he knew what was best for his marines and for The United States of America. How arrogant. This man who was placed in a position of trust and authority took it upon himself to decide the fates of every person under his command, to decide who lived or died. This is what liars do. They take it upon themselves to alter the truth for others. They are arrogant enough to believe that they have the right to do so, and this arrogance extends to believing that they are actually benefitting society. Moreover, although a so-called warrior, that colonel was a coward, lying to protect his position. True warriors face their challenges and the consequences of their actions. And human beings with strong moral character and dignity understand that there are never circumstances in which they must lie.

Remember that your intro and conclusion can be as creative as you would like. It is always good to have your conclusion in mind when you are writing your introduction. In fact, a good exercise for you is to try writing your intro and conclusion together.

Exercise: Try writing conclusions to the remaining introductory paragraphs from 3.1.

Levels 4, 5, 6

6.0: Essays

The essay ties everything together. It starts with your introduction—a way to draw the reader in, get that reader interested and thinking about your point of view. The body paragraphs are the facts and support. They must give convincing evidence to support your thesis statement. Do not stop at something general: Supporting idea/example. Move further. Analyze the examples for your readers. Make them think. Take your time. Demonstrate your level of English by showing that you are comfortable with the language. And then you present your conclusion. Your concluding paragraph wraps everything up. It makes the reader take a step back, think about your convincing arguments, and then decide that you have sound ideas. If your reader has not changed his mind, he should at least be thinking about your point of view. He should at least understand that you have valid arguments. The key words here: make your readers think.

Prompt: Which is more important—the environment or the economy?

Earth: A Legacy

“We do not inherit the earth from our parents. We borrow it from our children” (*Native American History*, 206). This Native American proverb aptly describes the relationship between humans and the earth. There is only one Earth, and it cannot be replaced. Because of this fact, it is important to view the earth as a legacy. One does not treat a legacy with contempt. Rather, one values and appreciates a legacy as something inherited and passed on to future generations. In this way, the earth is both borrowed from one’s children and inherited from one’s parents. On the other hand, economies are temporary and replaceable. Every country has a national economy. Every city or state within that country has its own economy. Even smaller towns and provinces have their own economies, and families have their own, personal economies. Economies always rise and fall, shrink and expand, change and adapt. Humans do not worry about economies because economies can always be created again and again. However, humans cannot create the environment again. Humans are incapable of generating another Earth. Therefore, the environment is more important than the economy because humans need the environment to survive, the environment cannot be replaced, and the economy is replaceable.

The three essential ingredients for life are food, water, and shelter. The environment produces all three. “The world already produces more than 1 ½ times enough food to feed everyone on the planet. That’s enough to feed 10 billion people, the population peak we expect by 2050” (Gimenez, *Nature*). This information means that food shortages are caused by poor management of Earth’s resources, not a lack of them. Furthermore, the earth provides plenty of fresh water for its inhabitants. As for shelter, the ozone layer protects people from radiation, and there is enough raw material for people to use for protection from the elements. On the other hand, people do not require money to survive, nor do they require trade or other forms of economy. There have been numerous cases of someone dying from asphyxiation, lack of oxygen, starvation, lack of food, or exposure, lack of shelter. There has never been a case of someone dying for lack of economy. One might say that money is needed to buy food, water, and shelter. But this does not mean money is necessary. It simply means that humans do not manage the earth’s resources well, and they withhold such resources from people who need them. People do not die because they do not have money. They die because they do not have food. In this way, then, while the environment is necessary for the human race’s survival, the economy is not. Thus, the economy is less important than the environment.

Furthermore, the environment cannot be replaced. Even under the best circumstances, humans can only ‘create’ by using material that the environment already produces. Scientists are capable of taking hydrogen and oxygen and creating water. Yet, scientists are not capable of creating hydrogen. Scientists cannot go to a laboratory and whip up a batch of oxygen or nitrogen or argon or any of the other base elements required to produce breathable air. Because of this, when people deforest large sections of land, they must find other parts of the environment to fill that area. For example, this is similar to a person’s kitchen table getting broken and that person not having the resources to go to the store and replace it. The best she can do is move a table from another room into the kitchen. Now, that other room is missing the table that the kitchen gained. If the person’s furniture keeps getting destroyed, soon, she will have no other pieces of furniture to move around and replace these things. Soon, she will have to go to the store to buy more. Sadly, there is no ‘environment’ store. Once Earth’s resources are depleted, humans will be faced with an unavoidable truth: they are not creators. Consequently, the environment is more important than the economy since nothing can replace the environment.

Moreover, just as the environment cannot be created, an economy is easily created. It is so easy, in fact, that children can do this. For example, a group of children could have trading cards. Some cards are more valuable than others, and the children would set such values. Done. In just a few minutes, these adolescents have created their own economy. If the economy that they created collapsed, none of the children would die. The teachers or parents would not hear children screaming in agony because there was no longer a basis by which to trade cards. On the other hand, harm to the environment is long-lasting. In 1945, the United States of America dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Even fifty years later, survivors of the bombings were still experiencing affects from the damages to health and the environment. Yet, within just fifteen years after WWII, Japan was beginning to recover economically. This means that while the country was still filled with cancer victims and birth defects caused by the bombings as well as land, air, and water contamination, its economy was quickly healing to the point of an “economic boom” by the mid 1960s (Mills, *The Atomic Bomb and Its Outcome*). This information shows that although both the economy and environment collapsed during WWII, the economy was quickly rebuilt while the environment, down to this day, is still trying to heal. Because the economy is less vulnerable and easily replaceable, it is less important than the environment.

When someone is familiar with something, that person often takes the familiar thing for granted, like an inheritance. An inheritance is something passed on from generation to generation. The recipient did not have to work for it. If a person inherits one billion dollars, she is not going to reflect about the long, hard hours it took to earn such a fortune. Instead, she is simply going to be happy that she has received such a generous sum from her parents. On the other hand, when something is borrowed, a person

takes great care of that item because she knows that that item will eventually need to be returned. The same can be said about the environment. It has always been a part of humanity, like an inheritance, and humans have not had to work for it. While people might search for great fortunes or struggle to earn enough money to support their families, they never need to wonder where their next breath of air is coming from. However, people forget that future generations must use this planet as well, and so, rather than having inherited the earth, the earth has simply been borrowed from those future generations. Therefore, the earth is a precious gift the next generation has lent the current one, and it must be returned. Thus, the environment is and always will be more important than the economy.

Prompt: Should citizens with criminal records be allowed to see political office?

From Prison Cells to Oval Offices

On November 7, 1962, Nelson Mandela was sentenced to five years in prison for leaving South Africa without proper documentation. This was just the start of decades-long imprisonment due to a corrupt government. On February 11, 1990, Mandela was released from prison, and in 1994, Nelson Mandela, revolutionary, philanthropist, and former criminal became South Africa's first black president. Many people would agree that Mandela has been an inspiration to human rights activists all over the world. And if anyone asked if Mandela should have been named president, most people would agree that he should have. This was a wise decision. Mandela's example, as well as others, show that just because someone is a former criminal does not mean that person should be prohibited from helping his people. In fact, that ex-convict could have many beneficial qualities needed to govern a society. Consequently, people with criminal backgrounds should be allowed to seek political office because society needs various representatives, people change, and some laws are senseless.

A society is not composed of just one element, but of many. This is why people of various backgrounds are required to govern such a society. For centuries, many countries held onto monarchies, rule by king or queen. These governments produced injustice and corruption on such a large scale that many revolutions occurred because the common people did not want to be treated as less-than-human by the nobility. The Hasmonean Revolt, the French Revolution, and the Revolutionary War are all examples of a majority of people being underrepresented. In today's society, most countries have replaced monarchies with democracies that guarantee equal representation for citizens regardless of citizens' nobility, gender, skin color, religion or any other segregating demographic. Because of this, criminals, too, should be represented. When people go to prison, they are removed from society. But once these

people reenter society, they have reentered society. These ex-convicts are now a part of a demographic that should, by all rights of a democratic government, be represented. Therefore, it would be unjust in a democratic society to discriminate against its own members, former criminals, by not allowing them to seek political office.

Furthermore, leader and civil rights' activist Mahatma Gandhi said, "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." These words demonstrate that people are capable of change. Also, if people change, they can change the world. Most people want to live in a better society in a better country in a better world. Every day, social activists work to accomplish such goals. However, if those same activists were forbidden to seek change because of mistakes that they made in the past, few people would have the opportunity to change themselves and thus the world. "When Kevin Mitnick was 16 years old, he hacked the computer system of Digital Equipment Corporation and stole their software" (Huffington Post). After being a fugitive for almost three years, Mitnick changed his life by helping companies protect themselves against cyber crimes. By the time KweisiMfume was 18 years old, he had fathered five children, dropped out of high school, and been arrested. "At some point, he decided to change his life around and enroll in college. Mfume would go on to get his graduate degree from John Hopkins University, elected to the Baltimore City Council, Congress, and become president of the NAACP" (Business Insider). These are only two of many examples of people who wanted change and accomplished this. They wished for a better world for themselves and for their fellow humans. Rather than continue a life of crime, Kevin Mitnick began helping others, and rather than living a selfish life, KweisiMfume decided to help his city and fellow Black Americans. These examples show that it would be a great injustice to hold a person's past against him. People change, and therefore, should be allowed to seek political office even with a criminal record.

Moreover, there are many senseless laws. Until 1919, it was illegal for a woman to vote in the United States of America. Until 1967, it was illegal for people of different races to get married in the United States of America. And until the Parental Paid Leave Act of 2008, a woman or man could be fired in the United States instead of being given parental leave. Consequently, for people who oppose former criminals' seeking political office, such laws would condemn any woman who tried to vote, any couple of different races who fell in love, and any mother or father who wanted time off from work to care for their children. While some laws exist for the protection of society, other laws exist simply to discriminate against a group of people. Then, if a member of that group wanted to change the world, she would be seen as a criminal. Then, as a former criminal, she would be denied the very thing she was trying to accomplish in the first place: the betterment of society through political office. And so, it is illogical and impractical to not allow former criminals to run for office since these people might be exactly what society needed.

Nelson Mandela fought against a cruel, biased system. He was subjected to hatred and mistreatment simply because of the color of his skin. Although he was a citizen, a valid member of South African society, bigots did not want Mandela to voice his opinions of democracy. As Mandela fought the system, he changed from a criminal in the eyes of a corrupt government to a martyr in the eyes of the people he fought for. And if he had been denied political office, South Africa might not have made the changes necessary to dispose of senseless, unjust laws. Consequently, Mandela became the change he wished to see in the world. Any person who would want to deny a person of that, former criminal or not, is unjust.

Prompt: Is it always necessary to tell the truth, or are there circumstances in which it is necessary to lie?

Lying: The Arrogant and Cowardly Way of Life

“I want the truth!” Lieutenant Kaffee demands.

Colonel Jessup responds, “You can’t handle the truth!”

In 1992’s *A Few Good Men*, Jack Nicholson’s character, Colonel Nathan Jessup, exclaims the very principle behind why people do not feel that the truth is essential: arrogance. People may offer many reasons for lying. Some say that it is to protect the ones they love. Others believe that lying is essential to maintain social order. Still others claim that lying is at the very fabric of the human condition and that no human can really avoid lying. Yet, regardless of whether or not a human can avoid lying or believes that it is necessary to do so, lying requires arrogance. For, it is arrogant to believe that other people are incapable of ‘handling’ the truth as if the liar is the only person mature and intelligent enough to see reality for what it is. It is arrogant to believe that robbing someone of the dignity of the truth is in that person’s best interests. And it is arrogant to believe that society, as a whole, could not function with accurate perceptions of reality. Yes, the liar takes it upon herself to declare what people can and cannot know, and in doing so, she believes that she is somehow benefiting society. Yet, lying is merely a crutch used by cowards. It is never essential. Rather than weaving the very fabric of the human condition, lying destroys it.

One reason given for the necessity of the lie is for the benefit of children. People often say that children need to believe in something, that they require imagination. The foundation of this argument is misleading. Most children live in a world of pretend, and it is quite difficult to find a child who does not use his imagination. Still, parents believe that telling children Santa Clause is real, or the Easter Bunny

will visit them, helps children to maintain their innocence. So parents lie. They spend years creating the pretense that Santa has visited the children. Then, when their children are old enough to realize that there is no Santa Clause, they have entered one of the first stages of adulthood. Parents are basically saying that to become an adult, one must stop trusting one's parents. The two people whom that child should depend on most in the world are not to be trusted. And if that child's parents have a religious belief, the child might find it confusing to understand the difference between faith and temporary fiction. Furthermore, how does a parent explain to his child that Santa apparently loves children from wealthy families more? That can be the only conclusion when children show their Christmas gifts to one another, and one child's family could afford a few nice pieces of clothing while another child's family bought for him the latest electronic devices. If anything, belief in Santa corrupts a child's imagination. For most children would imagine a world where everyone received anything they wanted, a world without disparity and social class. By maintaining the pretense of Santa, however, parents are basically telling their children that even in the realm of fantasy, poor people receive very little. In this way, lying to one's children is far from essential. Rather, it is really a demonstration of arrogance, arrogantly believing that adults are free to manipulate children's trust and create for them a rite of passage that involves unraveling the lies told to them.

Other situations in which people believe lying is necessary are social situations. Many people call these lies 'white lies.' 'White lies,' supposedly hurt no one and benefit society because they prevent hurt feelings. For example, a woman might ask her friend if her outfit looks nice. Because they are best friends and the woman does not want to hurt her friend's feelings, she would respond that the outfit looked great on her friend. In reality, though, her friends' clothes are too tight or a terrible color or in some other way unflattering. Lying in this situation makes no sense. Famous musician, John Lennon said, "Being honest might not get you a lot of friends, but it'll always get you the right ones" (*Beatles Anthology*). Rather than helping her friend, the woman in the example is helping herself and is certainly not looking for 'the right' friend. She might be afraid of angering or upsetting her friend by telling the truth. And if her friend is angry, the women's friendship might end. Or, it is possible that she believes her friend to be too fragile to hear that she has gained some weight or that she does not look good in certain colors. Either way, lying in this situation is a demonstration of arrogance. The woman arrogantly believes that she can manipulate their friendship by lying on occasion, thus keeping someone as a friend who might not really want to be her friend. Also, through arrogance, she believes that her friend is not emotionally mature enough to hear the truth. There is certainly a way to offer advice and criticism without being unnecessarily harsh or rude. But this way takes time, effort, and humility. Consequently, the cowardly way to react in social situations is to simply lie, deny friends and acquaintances of the dignity of hearing the truth, making the liar's life easier and with less work to do.

Lastly, people feel that lying is essential when a person's job could be affected. In 1989, the supertanker Exxon Valdez ran into a reef and ruptured. It spilled over 11 million gallons of crude oil into Alaska's Prince William Sound. It was considered "the worst[ecological disaster] that had occurred up to that point in American history, damaging more than 1,300 miles of shoreline, disrupting the lives and livelihoods of people in the region and killing hundreds of thousands of birds and marine animals (*New York Times Archives, vol. IX*)." A federal jury found the Exxon Valdez' captain, Joseph J. Hazelwood, guilty of "gross negligence" because of his "heavy drinking" on the job and the company as well for allowing Hazelwood to continue captaining supertankers (*New York Times Archives, vol. IX*). This alcohol abuse did not occur suddenly. It was proven that the former captain had been abusing alcohol for years. This means that someone or many people throughout Hazelwood's career most likely helped him hide this addiction. Joseph Hazelwood should have been fired. Whether one's mistakes seem innocent or not, lives can be lost and great economic and environmental disasters can occur from the cowardice of not admitting one's mistakes, for not seeking help, and for not having the moral character to face the consequences of one's actions. Consequently, even when lying might save one's professional career, it is still not essential to lie. Doing so, in fact, reveals a weak moral character and a cowardice that harms rather than benefits society.

In the film, *A Few Good Men*, an officer orders the death of one of his lieutenants because he claims that it is a matter of national security. Basically, that murdered marine had been considered 'weak' and 'sloppy' in terms of carrying out his assignments. Rather than following protocol, Jack Nicholson's character orders a 'Code Red,' which is a secret order for those under his command to kill one of their fellow marines. These actions lead to a trial and ultimately the arrest of the colonel for taking matters into his own hands. He essentially believed that he was above the law, that he knew what was best for his marines and for The United States of America. How arrogant. This man who was placed in a position of trust and authority took it upon himself to decide the fates of every person under his command, to decide who lived or died. This is what liars do. They take it upon themselves to alter the truth for others. They are arrogant enough to believe that they have the right to do so, and this arrogance extends to believing that they are actually benefitting society. Moreover, although a so-called warrior, that colonel was a coward, lying to protect his position. True warriors face their challenges and the consequences of their actions. And human beings with strong moral character and dignity understand that there are never circumstances in which they must lie.

Remember: If you are bored writing your essay, your readers will be bored reading your essay. You must find something in the topic that moves you. Find your passion and connect it to your essay. If you are excited about your writing, you will move your readers to be excited as well.

Wars do not start on the battlefield. They start with a pen and paper. They begin with ideas communicated to kings and emperors, commanders and chiefs, to armadas and fleets to the lone soldier on the battlefield with sword in hand. Writing is both an art and a weapon. The right words can crush empires and forge kingdoms. And those who have the skill to pen such words, to influence kings and emperors, to rally commanders and chiefs, to awaken armadas and fleets, to inspire lone soldiers ...those are writers.