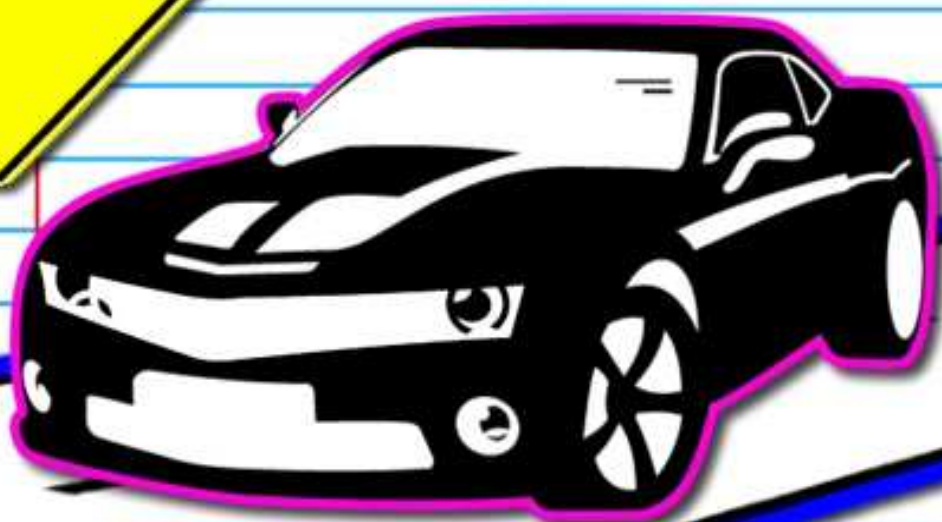
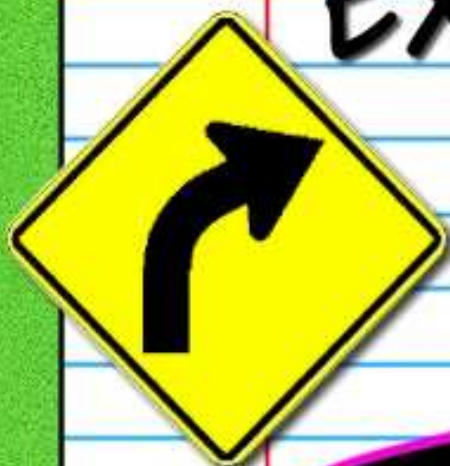


A Student's Guide to
**INFORMATIVE/
EXPLANATORY
WRITING**



DRIVING 
an **EFFECTIVE ESSAY**

Informative & Explanatory Writing

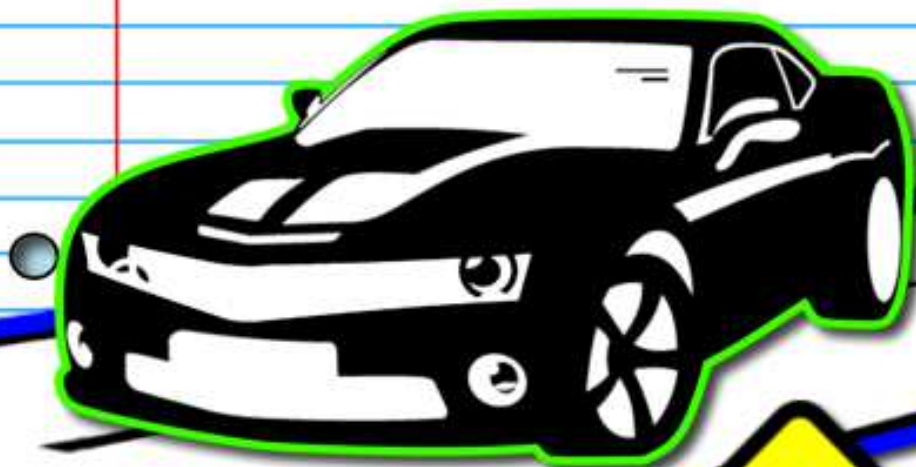
The purpose of informative and explanatory writing is to **INFORM**,

EXPLAIN, and **ANALYZE**

information for the reader in an **objective** (unbiased) way.



ESSAY TERMS



Helpful
terminology to
know before you
begin writing

Informative & Explanatory ESSAYS: General Characteristics

1. **INTRODUCTION:** The introduction grabs the reader's attention and gives the reader a path to follow.
2. **THESIS STATEMENT:** The thesis statement is the main idea of the essay, mapping it out for the reader.
3. **TRANSITIONS:** Transitions merge ideas and make for a smooth essay.
4. **BODY:** The body paragraphs are the driving force of the essay. They consist of the main points and evidence for support.
5. **SUPPORT/EVIDENCE:** The supporting details and facts not only fuel the essay, but give meaning to it.
6. **CONCLUSION:** The essay isn't complete without a concluding paragraph that completes the journey, bringing the reader home.

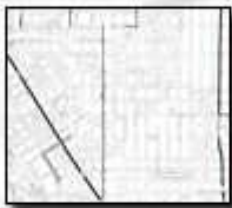




- The essay is a journey for the reader.



- The writer is in the driver's seat, steering the reader toward each destination.



- The thesis statement in the introduction serves as a map for the reader.



- Each sub-point in the body of the essay is a destination along the journey, enhancing the main point/central idea.



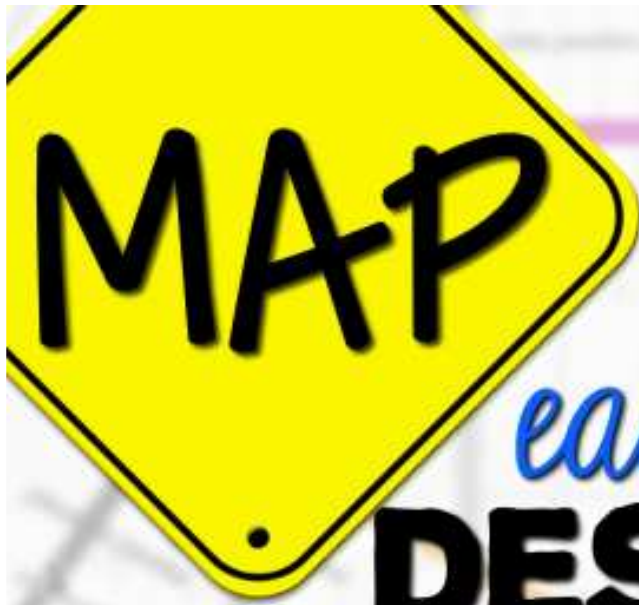
- Supporting evidence such as facts, quotes, and data fuel the sub-points and add credibility to the essay.



- Transitions merge the sub-points together for a smooth ride.



- The conclusion serves as a stop sign for the reader, indicating the journey is over.



each
DESTINATION



of your
ESSAY



A THESIS STATEMENT is your ROAD MAP to your essay.

➔ A THESIS STATEMENT declares the main point or central message of your essay.

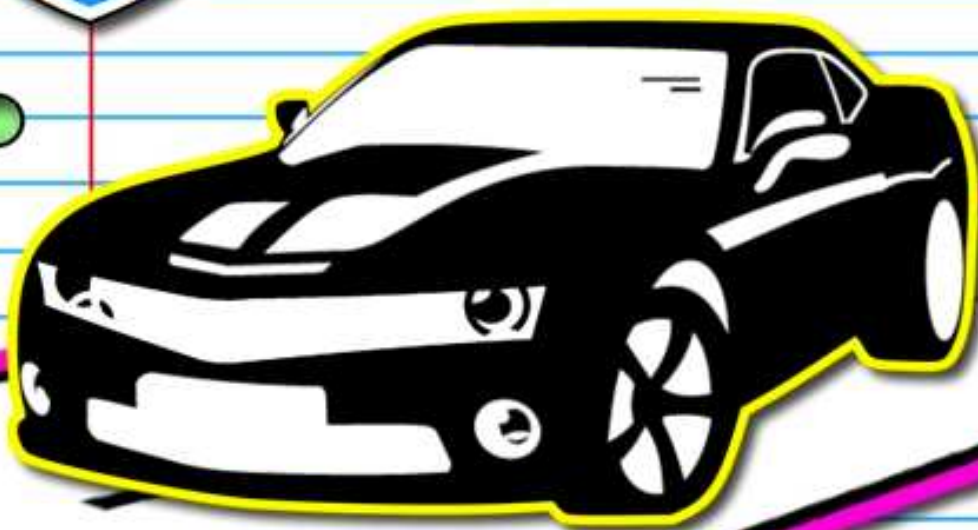
➔ It lets your readers know the direction of your essay.

➔ Like a map, your statement should be focused and concise.





WHERE TO BEGIN THE JOURNEY...



NOTE: Some may wish to wait until AFTER writing the body paragraphs to write the introduction and conclusion. That is OK.

WRITING YOUR INTRODUCTION & CONCLUSION

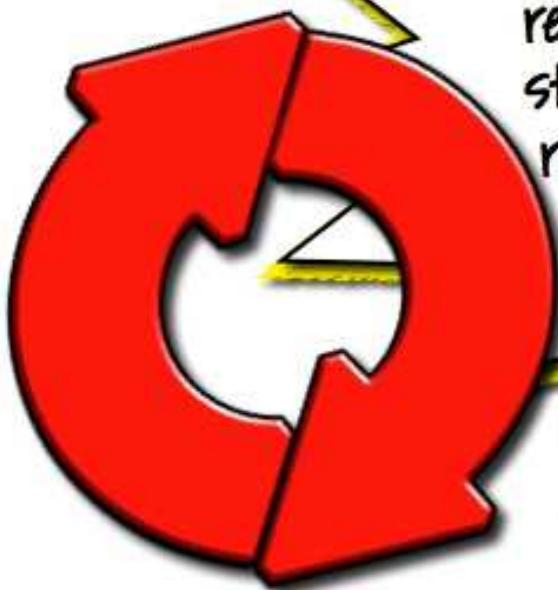
Write your introduction and conclusion last. Often these are the hardest to write, but they become easier after you've finished the body of your paper.

➔ **INTRODUCTION** - First, the introduction needs to grab the reader's attention; next, it should transition into the thesis statement. The thesis statement maps the essay for the reader, identifying the main point/central idea and sub-points.

START!



➔ **CONCLUSION** - Your conclusion should remind the reader of your thesis statement without being repetitive. Good conclusions tie-in with the hook so the essay comes full-circle.



THE FULL CIRCLE HOOK

Think about an opening that can come full circle in the conclusion. Start with a tease that piques your readers' interest; you'll come back to it in your conclusion. You might want to try:

- A surprising fact or statistic
- An unexpected anecdote
- A sensory-detailed description of a scene or situation
- A dilemma or puzzling scenario
- A thought-provoking question

Include a **transition sentence** after your hook that leads into your **THESIS STATEMENT**.



THE INTRODUCTION

EXAMPLE INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH

(143 words; 10 sentences)

Imagine working sixty-hour weeks on your family farm planting the harvest, feeding the livestock, mending fences, and fixing the equipment because your family can't afford to hire a mechanic. You rise well before sunrise in the dark to tend to the animals while your younger siblings sleep. As they laugh and play on their walk to school, you must stay home and help your parents work to keep the farm going. They get to socialize with their peers each day, but you can't remember the last time you talked to anyone your age. Then one day you wake up to find all your hard work and sacrifice has blown away in the wind. Your family is homeless. Penniless. Hungry. For too many people during the 1930s, this was common. The Great Depression had an adverse affect on families, education, and the economy.



THE INTRODUCTION

EXAMPLE INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH

(143 words; 10 sentences)

Imagine working sixty-hour weeks on your family farm planting the harvest, feeding the livestock, mending fences, and fixing the equipment because your family can't afford to hire a mechanic. You rise well before sunrise in the dark to tend to the animals while your younger siblings sleep. As they laugh and play on their walk to school, you must stay home and help your parents work to keep the farm going. They get to socialize with their peers each day, but you can't remember the last time you talked to anyone your age. Then one day you wake up to find all your hard work and sacrifice has blown away in the wind. Your family is homeless. Penniless. Hungry. For too many people during the 1930s, this was common. The Great Depression hit families, education, and the economy.

THE HOOK

This student example describes a situation from the perspective of an adolescent during the Great Depression.



THE INTRODUCTION

EXAMPLE INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH

(143 words, 10 sentences)

Imagine working sixty-hour weeks on your family farm planting the harvest, feeding the livestock, mending fences, and fixing the equipment because your family can't afford to hire a mechanic. You rise well before sunrise in the dark to tend to the animals while your younger siblings sleep. As they laugh and play on their walk to school, you must stay home and help your parents

THE TRANSITION

Linking the HOOK to the THESIS STATEMENT.

they get to socialize with their peers after the last time you talked to your friend. When you wake up to find all your hard work and sacrifice has blown away in the wind, your family is homeless. Penniless. Hungry. For too many people during the 1930s, this was common. The Great Depression had an adverse affect on families, education, and the economy.



THE INTRODUCTION

EXAMPLE INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH

(143 words; 10 sentences)

Imagine working sixty-hour weeks on your family farm planting the harvest, feeding the livestock, mending fences, and fixing the equipment because your family can't afford to hire a mechanic. You rise well before sunrise in the dark to tend to the animals while your younger siblings sleep. As they laugh and play on their walk to school, you must stay home and help your parents work to keep the farm going. Each day, but you can't remember anyone your age. The work and sacrifice has blown away in the wind. Your family is homeless. Penniless. Hungry. For too many people during the 1930s, this was common. **The Great Depression had an adverse affect on families, education, and the economy.**

THE THESIS STATEMENT

Sub-point 1

• Affect on families

Sub-point 2

• Affect on education

Sub-point 3

• Affect on the economy

TRANSITIONS help **MERGE** ideas together.
They help the flow of the essay and ensure a cohesiveness.

Here are a few words and phrases organized by **PURPOSE** to use in your paragraphs to **SIGNAL** a transition from one sub-point to the other, from one example to another, to show comparisons, and more.



TO CLARIFY:

after all, as can be expected, clearly, generally, markedly, namely, naturally, obviously, of course, specifically, surely, usually

TO SHOW RELATIONSHIP:

as for, by the same token, comparatively, correspondingly, coupled with, equally, identically, in comparison, in the same way, moreover, likewise, similarly, still, together with, with regard to, with reference to

COUNTERPOINTS:

alternatively, another possibility, aside from, barring, beside, but, conversely, except, excluding, exclusive of, even though, hence, however, in contrast, instead, nevertheless, other than, on one hand, on the other hand, on the contrary, rather, save, still, yet

TO LINK:

also, and, as an example, as an illustration, as far as, furthermore, for example, for instance, in addition, in contrast, in the same way, moreover, next, not only...but also, now, similarly, so, to, thus, turning to

MORE OR LESS:

additionally, also, again, as well as, besides, coupled with, furthermore, in addition, likewise, moreover, similarly

TO SHOW CONSEQUENCE (CAUSE/EFFECT):

accordingly, as a result, consequently, for this reason, for this purpose, hence, otherwise, so then, subsequently, therefore, thus

TO CONTRAST AND COMPARE:

but, by the same token, conversely, comparatively, correspondingly, coupled with, however, identically, in contrast, in comparison, instead, moreover, nevertheless, likewise, on one hand, on the other hand, on the contrary, rather, similarly, still, together with, yet

Continued...

TO EMPHASIZE and EXEMPLIFY:

above all, chiefly, especially, for instance, including, in particular, markedly, namely, particularly, singularly, specifically, such as, more importantly

TO SHOW EXCEPTION:

aside from, barring, beside, except, excluding, exclusive of, other than, save

TO SHOW a SEQUENCE (STEPS/HOW-TO):

afterward, at first, at the same time, earlier, first of all, for the time being, in the first place, in time, in turn, in conclusion, later, later on, meanwhile, next, simultaneously, soon, then, while, with this in mind

TO summarize & restate:

after all, all in all, all things considered, briefly, by and large, finally, in any case, in any event, in brief, in conclusion, in short, in summary, in the final analysis, on the whole, to summarize

DIRECTIONAL (PROCESS/HOW-TO):

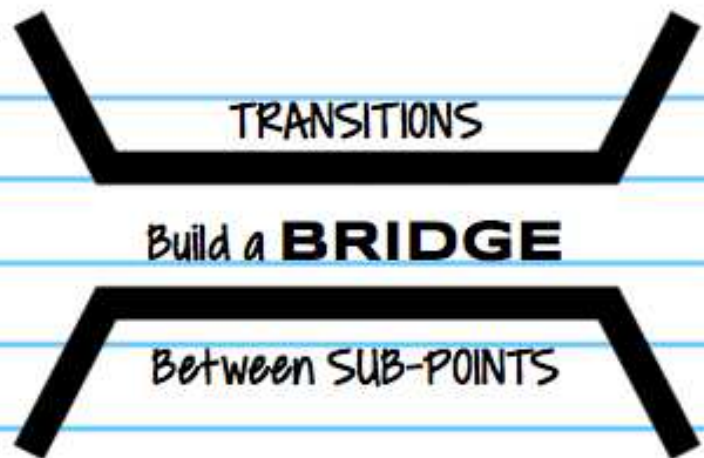
above, beyond, by the way, here, in the distance, nearby, over there, opposite, there, to the left, to the right, under

ILLUSTRATION (EXAMPLES):

as an example, as an illustration, for example, for instance, for one thing, in this case, to clarify

TO convey a SEQUENCE & SHIFT in TIME/SETTING:

afterward, at first, at the same time, earlier, finally, first of all, for the time being, in the first place, in time, in turn, in conclusion, later, later on, meanwhile, next, simultaneously, soon, then, to begin, to conclude, while, with this in mind, above, beyond, by the way, here, in the distance, nearby, over there, opposite, there, to the left, to the right, under



TRANSITIONS are **ESSENTIAL** for a smooth-flowing essay. Re-read your paragraphs and look for transition words. Make sure you are using these to BRIDGE and MERGE ideas.



THE INTRODUCTION

ADDITIONAL STUDENT EXAMPLE

HOOK

Millions of people lost jobs during the Great Depression. Families lost their homes, farms, and lives. But somehow, hope was not lost. The Great Depression allowed people in America to become unified, resourceful, and hopeful for the future.

THESIS STATEMENT

TRANSITION

MAIN IDEA: Positive Effects of the Great Depression



• People in America became unified



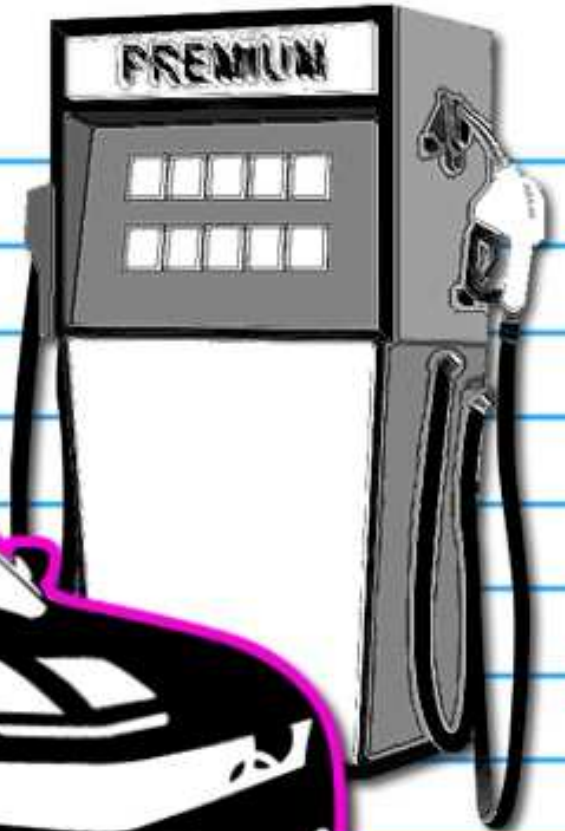
• People in America became resourceful



• People in America became hopeful

FUEL

your essay



with

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:

- Details
- Facts
- Data
- Quotes



THE BODY: WRITING A PARAGRAPH



STAY FOCUSED!

Each paragraph of your body will focus on a single sub-point (or category).



Your paragraph should include:



1. A topic sentence that includes your **SUB-POINT**: this should be near the beginning of the paragraph.

2. **EVIDENCE** to support your sub-point: use facts and data that you have researched.

3. **EXPLANATION** that links the facts and data to your sub-point.



4. **TRANSITIONAL** word, phrase, or sentence to link one sub-point to another sub-point (each sub-point will have its own paragraph; the beginning OR the end of each paragraph should include a transition).

STUDENT HANDOUT AVAILABLE





CAUSE & EFFECT EXAMPLE

THE BODY: WRITING A PARAGRAPH

EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH (208 words, 12 sentences)

The economic impact of the Great Depression was devastating for families, forcing them to become more frugal and resourceful. President Franklin D. Roosevelt addressed this issue in his second inaugural speech in 1937. "I see millions of families trying to live on incomes so meager that the pall of family disaster hangs over them day by day." The idea of not being able to provide for your family was bad enough; for at least a third of the nation, it was reality. In many cases, though, it brought the families together.

According to Robert J. Hastings in his memoir "Digging In," many people "weathered the storm" (1). Fathers worked whatever jobs they could get their hands on, and mothers worked to stretch every dollar they could get at home. "The cotton bags from flour, salt, and cracked chicken feed were washed, bleached, and cut into dish cloths and towels" (2). Some even created clothing out of the feed sacks. Nothing was wasted or thrown away; everything had a purpose. With no money for entertaining, families spent more time together at home after a hard day's work. They

listened to music, sang to one another, and formed lasting family bonds that would help them "weather" whatever came next (3).



CAUSE & EFFECT EXAMPLE THE BODY: WRITING A PARAGRAPH

EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH (208 words; 12 sentences)

The economic impact of the Great Depression was devastating for families, forcing them to become more frugal and resourceful. President Franklin D. Roosevelt addressed this issue in his second

SUB-POINT #1
TOPIC SENTENCE
Begins with the CAUSE and ends with the EFFECT.

...ions of families trying to live on
... family disaster hangs over
... being able to provide for your
... a third of the nation, it was

reality. In many cases, though, it brought the families together. According to Robert J. Hastings in his memoir "Digging In," many people "weathered the storm" (1). Fathers worked whatever jobs they could get their hands on, and mothers worked to stretch every dollar they could get at home. "The cotton bags from flour, salt, and cracked chicken feed were washed, bleached, and cut into dish cloths and towels" (2). Some even created clothing out of the feed sacks. Nothing was wasted or thrown away; everything had a purpose. With no money for entertaining, families spent more time together at home after a hard day's work. They listened to music, sang to one another, and formed lasting family bonds that would help them "weather" whatever came next (3).



CAUSE & EFFECT EXAMPLE

THE BODY: WRITING A PARAGRAPH

EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH (208 words, 12 sentences)

The economic impact of the Great Depression was devastating for families, forcing them to become more frugal and resourceful. President Franklin D. Roosevelt addressed this issue in his second inaugural speech in 1937. "I see millions of families trying to live on incomes so meager that the pall of family disaster hangs over them day by day." The idea of not being able to support a family was bad enough; for at least a few, it was a grim reality. In many cases, though, it brought families closer together. According to Robert J. Hastings in his memoir "Digging In," many people "weathered the storm." Fathers worked whatever jobs they could get their hands on, and mothers worked to stretch every dollar they could get at home. "The cotton bags from flour, salt, and cracked chicken feed were washed, bleached, and cut into dish cloths and towels" (2). Some even created clothing out of the feed sacks. Nothing was wasted or thrown away; everything had a purpose. With no money for entertaining, families spent more time together at home after a hard day's work. They listened to music, sang to one another, and formed lasting family bonds that would help them "weather" whatever came next (3).

EVIDENCE (expert quotes & paraphrases)



THE BODY: WRITING A PARAGRAPH

EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH (208 words, 12 sentences)

The economic impact of the Great Depression was devastating for families, forcing them to become more frugal and resourceful. President Franklin D. Roosevelt addressed this issue in his second inaugural speech in 1937. "I see millions of families trying to live on incomes so meager that the pall of family disaster hangs over them day by day." The idea of not being able to provide for your family was bad enough; for at least a third of the nation, it was reality. In many cases, though, it brought the families together. According to Robert J. Hastings in his memoir "Digging In," many

CITATIONS (In-text citations of source)

Introduce your source at the beginning of a sentence to give him/her credibility. Use phrases like:

- According to...
- A recent study from...
- [Author's Name] says...
- In his memoir "Digging In," Robert J. Hastings recalls...

Use PARENTHETICAL citations with the author's last name and page number (if it applies) for citations not written in the sentence.

...others worked whatever jobs they could. Mothers worked to stretch every penny. "The cotton bags from flour, salt, and rice were washed, bleached, and cut into strips. They even created clothing out of the scraps. Nothing was wasted or thrown away; everything had a purpose. In the evenings, families spent more time together. They listened to the radio and formed lasting family bonds. In his memoir "Digging In," Robert J. Hastings recalls that families "whatever came next" (3).



THE BODY: WRITING A PARAGRAPH

EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH (208 words, 12 sentences)

The economic impact of the Great Depression was devastating

EXPLANATIONS (an explanation links the evidence with the sub-point)

and more frugal and resourceful. He addressed this issue in his second volume, *The Great Depression*, where he described millions of families trying to live on

incomes so meager that the pall of family disaster hangs over them day by day." The idea of not being able to provide for your family was bad enough; for at least a third of the nation, it was reality. In many cases, though, it brought the families together.

According to Robert J. Hastir, **TRANSITION WORD** "In," many people "weathered the storm." Fathers worked whatever jobs they could get their hands on, and mothers worked to stretch every dollar they could get at home. "The cotton bags from flour, salt, and cracked chicken feed were washed, bleached, and cut into dish cloths and towels" (2). Some even created clothing out of the feed sacks. Nothing was wasted or thrown away; everything had a purpose. With no money for entertaining, families spent more time together at home after a hard day's work. They listened to music, sang to one another, and formed lasting family bonds that would help them "weather" whatever came next (3).



THE BODY: WRITING A PARAGRAPH

EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH (206 words; 12 sentences)

The economic impact of the Great Depression was devastating for families, forcing them to become more frugal and resourceful.

TRANSITION SENTENCE OR PHRASE (links the one reason with the next reason)

These can come at the end of the previous paragraph OR at the beginning of a new paragraph (as shown).

Other phrases that can be used include:

- Also...
- In addition...
- Furthermore...
- Similarly...
- Next...
- Not only...but also...
- In the same way...

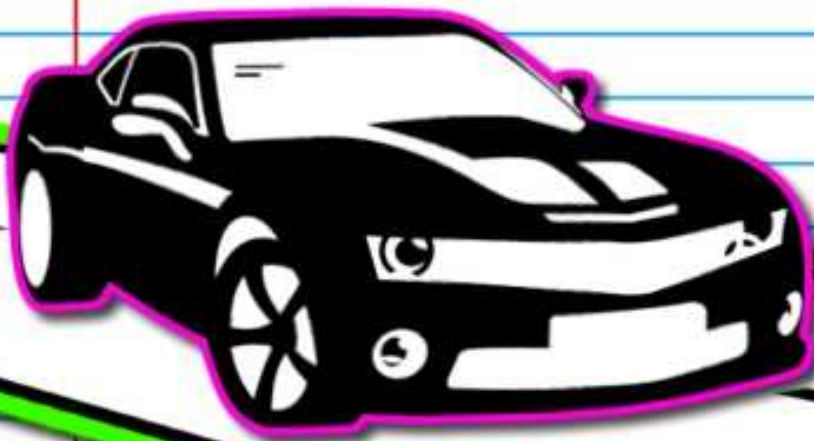
...in his second...
...ing to live on...
...angs over them...
...r your family...
...t was reality. In...
...r. According to...
...people...
...bs they could...
...every dollar...
...r, salt, and...
...ut into dish...
...of the feed...
...ing had a...
...spent more time...
...together in...
...sang to one another, and formed lasting family bonds that would help them "weather" whatever came next (3).

With so many families needing every member to work--no matter how young--education was no longer a priority. It, too, was affected by the Great Depression during the 1930s. Row that denying children a proper education could have led to negative consequences. "I see millions denied education, recreation,

SUB-POINT #2
TOPIC SENTENCE

**STOP
AHEAD**

Writing the
Conclusion



**HOW
TO END**
the Journey

THE FULL CIRCLE CONCLUSION

Write a conclusion that reminds your reader of the journey you've taken by referring back to your introduction.

The most effective conclusions circle back to the hook AND help the reader **SYNTHESIZE** the information they've learned:

- If you asked a rhetorical question, give the reader an answer that supports your main idea.
- If you gave an shocking fact, tell the reader the consequences if your claim is not followed through.
- Offer a solution to the problem or an alternative plan or system.
 - Give your reader something to think about.
 - End with a powerful quote from an expert that you haven't used yet.

By the end of the essay, your reader should sense closure, feel completeness in the topic, and hope to take another journey with you again.





THE CONCLUSION

EXAMPLE CONCLUSION PARAGRAPH

(121 words; 4 sentences)

Though the Great Depression had an adverse affect on families, education, and the economy, hope was not lost. When families found themselves homeless and penniless, President Roosevelt's New Deal reforms helped them back on their feet, reassuring the American people that even in the darkest days, the government would not turn its back on them. Roosevelt proclaimed, "The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little." And it was perhaps those provisions, spurred by the New Deal, that gave the nation the sustenance and hope it desperately needed when it faced a new enemy just a few years later.

★ THE CONCLUSION

EXAMPLE CONCLUSION PARAGRAPH

(121 words; 4 sentences)

TRANSITION WORD

Though the Great Depression had an adverse affect on families, education, and the economy, hope was not lost. Within families

REINFORCING THE THESIS STATEMENT

A NEW PERSPECTIVE:

Help the reader see a new way to look at your main idea after reading the body. Here, hope is found in adversity.

of our progress is not whether those who have much; it is whether those who have too little." And it was

by the New Deal, that gave the nation the sustenance and hope it desperately needed when it faced a new enemy just a few years later.



THE CONCLUSION

EXAMPLE CONCLUSION PARAGRAPH

(121 words; 4 sentences)

QUOTE TO
ENHANCE NEW
UNDERSTANDING

...ssion had an adverse affect on families,
...hope was not lost. When families
...ss and pennness, President Roosevelt's
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THE CONCLUSION

EXAMPLE CONCLUSION PARAGRAPH

(121 words; 4 sentences)

Though the Great Depression had an adverse affect on families, education, and the economy, hope was not lost. When families found themselves homeless and penniless, President Roosevelt's New Deal reforms helped American people through what would not turn out to be the

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little." And it was perhaps those provisions, spurred by the New Deal, that gave the nation the sustenance and hope it desperately needed when it faced a new enemy just a few years later.

How to avoid PLAGIARIZING:



➡ PLAGIARISM is when the writer presents another person's language or ideas (or paper) as if it was his/her own work.

➡ PLAGIARISM includes using the words, ideas, answers, or works of another writer without providing clear acknowledgement of the original author and an accurate citation.

- ➡ Give the author credit:
- ✓ Include the author's name
 - ✓ Include the title on first mention
 - ✓ Include the page numbers (if it is a print source) in the PARENTHETICAL CITATIONS

- ➡ Use QUOTES when you cite your source word-for-word.

- ➡ Make sure your paraphrases mean the same as the original text. (Don't mislead the reader.)

STUDENT HANDOUT AVAILABLE



INCLUDE A WORKS CITED (BIBLIOGRAPHY) PAGE AT THE END OF YOUR ESSAY:

Author's Last Name, First Name. "Article Title." *Title of Magazine or Website*. Day Month Year of publication. Publisher or website sponsor: [Use N.p. for "No publisher."] Page [Use N. pag. for no page]. Type (medium) of resource. Date you accessed article [web only].

Example:

Heffernan, Virginia. "The Argument Against Headphones." *The New York Times Magazine*. NYTimes.com, 07 Jan. 2011. Web. 11 Aug. 2014.

MLA FORMAT