

Elements of an Essay

Introduction: Usually an introduction starts broad and narrows down to your specific topic, ending in the thesis. This is your opportunity to establish why readers might be curious about your general topic, catch their attention, or put your essay in context.

Thesis: Your introduction should end with a clear, specific thesis statement, which will tell readers exactly what your paper will be arguing. Each body paragraph will directly and obviously support your thesis.

Body Paragraphs: An essay usually has at least three body paragraphs, and these will be the arguments, evidence, or topics that support your thesis.

Topic Sentences: Each body paragraph will begin with a topic sentence which introduces its topic. All of the information in that paragraph will be clearly and logically related to that topic sentence, which in turn should obviously relate to the thesis.

Support: You use arguments, data, facts, analysis, quotes, anecdotes, examples, details, etc. to support your topic sentences and flesh out your body paragraphs. A good rule of thumb is to have at least three points to support each topic sentence.

Transitions: An effective essay will show the connection between paragraphs with transitions. These can be the final sentence of each body paragraph or can be integrated into the next topic sentence with transition words.

Conclusion: A conclusion should wrap up your essay, but should not introduce new information or arguments. It should begin with a sentence that looks a lot like your thesis to summarize the general points of the paper as a whole, and then draw your paper neatly to a close.

Body Paragraphs: Topic Sentences and Textual Evidence

In this essay, you must answer the following three questions. Each question requires a paragraph (5-8 sentences). This paragraph must contain a topic sentence, a context, a quote, and an explanation.

How would you describe Marjane's interaction with Western culture?		
Key words to describe Western culture in the film:	My answer to the question:	A possible quote from the movie:

Examples of each part:

- 1) **Topic sentence (Complete the following fragment with your answer for the question)**
e.i. Marjane's interaction with Western culture is evident because she loves American music and films, western fashion, chocolate, and alcohol.

- 2) **Context (Tell me what do I need to know to understand your quote)**
e.i. After the Revolution, Marjane had to acquire her beloved pieces of Western culture in the black market because all western items were prohibited and questioned.

- 3) **Textual evidence (Make sure to read the page about quote introductions)**
e.i. At the beginning of the movie, Marjane was interrogated by her school female teachers because she was wearing a jean jacket and converse tennis shoes. The teachers exclaimed "why are you wearing punk sneakers" and "this is Western trash" (Persepolis).

- 4) **Analyze evidence (Explain the textual evidence)**
e.i. Obviously, in this scene, the female teachers represent the theocratic government and Marjane represents the Iranian democratic people. In other words, the government is controlling people's freedoms by imposing the religious laws.

Marjane's interaction with Western culture is evident because she loves American music and films, western fashion, chocolate, and alcohol. After the Revolution, Marjane had to acquire her beloved pieces of Western culture in the black market because all western items were prohibited and questioned. At the beginning of the movie, Marjane was interrogated by her school female teachers because she was wearing a jean jacket and converse tennis shoes. The teachers exclaimed "why are you wearing punk sneakers" and "this is Western trash" (Persepolis). Obviously, in this scene, the female teachers represent the theocratic government and Marjane represents the Iranian people. In other words, the government is controlling people's freedoms by imposing the religious laws.

Paragraph #2

Whom do you think is described as the bigger enemy in the movie -- the Shah or the Islamic regime that takes control after the Shah?		
Key words to describe the bigger enemy in the movie:	My answer to the question:	A possible quote from the movie:

1) Topic sentence (Complete the following fragment with your answer for the question)

2) Context (Tell me what do I need to know to understand your quote)

3) Textual evidence (Make sure to read the page about quote introductions)

4) Analyze evidence (Explain the textual evidence)

Paragraph #3

Why does Satrapi think that the Islamic regime was able to gain control of Iran after the 1979 Revolution?		
Key words to describe why the Islamic regime was able to gain control of Iran :	My answer to the question:	A possible quote from the movie:

1) Topic sentence (Complete the following fragment with your answer for the question)

2) Context (Tell me what do I need to know to understand your quote)

3) Textual evidence (Make sure to read the page about quote introductions)

4) Analyze evidence (Explain the textual evidence)