

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Miss Skirtich

3 October 2017

English 10: World Literature

## How to Prepare a Thesis Paper

### Step-by-Step Instruction

When composing a thesis paper, use these easy steps to organize your thoughts and make your writing flow smoothly.

1. **Compose your thesis statement.** This statement must be an opinion, meaning that it is something that can be argued. It cannot be a fact. Moreover, it should follow the list format.
  - a. Example of thesis statement: *Hamlet and Ophelia's troubled love affair is driven by insanity, abnormal family dynamics, and spying.*
  - b. In the above example, you will notice that the listed items of *insanity, abnormal family dynamics, and spying* are all in different colors. This means that each one of these listed reasons will become its own body paragraph. If you find that you cannot write about one of the listed reasons in your paper for an entire paragraph, then you need to rethink your listed reason.
  
2. **Outline your paper.** Taking your thesis statement and its color-coordinated list of reasons, chop it up and make each reason listed in its own body paragraph. Each listed reason should be the topic sentence (the 1<sup>st</sup> sentence) of that paragraph. Just simply cut and paste, reusing the same wording from your thesis statement in each topic sentence to make your writing flow and coherent.
  - a. Example of topic sentence #1 in body paragraph #1: *Hamlet and Ophelia's troubled love affair is driven by insanity.*
  - b. Example of topic sentence #2 in body paragraph #2: *Additionally, Hamlet and Ophelia's troubled love affair is driven by abnormal family dynamics.*
  - c. Example of topic sentence #3 in body paragraph #2: *Finally, Hamlet and Ophelia's troubled love affair is driven by spying.*
  - d. Notice in the above examples how the words in *blue* are reused over and over again. These come directly from your thesis statement. Each topic sentence changes with the reason listed. The only other change that occurs here are in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> topic sentences with the words in *red*, which indicate transition words to make your writing flow more smoothly. You can also swap out the verbs here with a synonym to further spice up your writing (for example, use *implements* instead of *infuses*)
  
3. **Find citations for your body paragraphs 1<sup>st</sup>!** Contrary to what most students think, a paper should NEVER start to be drafted in the introduction paragraph. This might seem strange, but the easiest part to start writing about is the meat of your paper, i.e. the body paragraphs. Use your topic sentences to direct your writing. That means that the total number of quotations for your paper should be at least 6 in total (2 per body paragraph!)
  - a. Each body paragraph needs at least 2 pieces of textual evidence to support the argument in the paragraph. More than 2 pieces of textual evidence is awesome, but never use less than that. Otherwise, your argument will not be as credible or believable. Cite your textual evidence with direct quotations from the text. In books, use the author's last name and page number. In plays, use the Act, Scene, and Line #.
  - b. Example of topic sentence #1 in body paragraph #1: *Hamlet and Ophelia's troubled love affair is driven by insanity.*
    - i. **Quote #1:** Hamlet pretends to go insane with his friends and friendly, which complicates things with Ophelia.  
**Citation:** "I am but mad north north-west. When the/ wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a handsaw" (Act II, Scene ii, Lines 402-403) cite it like this ---> (II.ii.402-403).

- ii. **Quote #2:** Hamlet contradicts himself, saying that he once loved Ophelia and then denying that he ever loved her.

**Citation:** "I did love you once" (III.ii.125) "I loved you not" (III.ii.129)

- c. Follow this format for each of your body paragraphs, using your topic sentences to guide which quotations you should look for in the text. Make sure that the quotation that you use supports your topic sentence. If it doesn't support it, look for another quotation instead.

4. **Build your body paragraphs.** After you find your textual evidence, you want to start to compose your body paragraphs. Follow this formula to make your writing a breeze:

- a. Topic Sentence: *Hamlet and Ophelia's troubled love affair is driven by insanity.*
- b. Introduce your quote in a few words: *One instance in which insanity comes into play occurs when Hamlet reveals to his friends that he only fakes his craziness, "I am but mad north north-west. When the/ wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a handsaw" (II.ii.402-403).*
- c. Explain how your quote supports your topic sentence for at least 2 sentences: *In this quote, Hamlet unveils that he plans to fool his family and friends by feigning his insanity. By Hamlet pretending to be insane, he furthers complicates his relationship with Ophelia, which makes things sticky for him.*
- d. Transition to next quote and introduce quote in a few words. *Another example of insanity in the play crops up when Hamlet contradicts himself about loving Ophelia, "I did love you once" (III.ii.125).*
- e. Explain how your quote supports your topic sentence for at least 2 sentences: *In this instance from the text, Hamlet tells Ophelia that he used to love her, but he contradicts himself a few lines later when he denies that he ever loved her, "I loved you not" (III.ii.129). Hamlet and Ophelia's relationship becomes even more tangled and complicated due to the insanity that plagues Hamlet for most of the play.*
- f. Wrap up your paragraph by reiterating your topic sentence: *Insanity pilots Hamlet and Ophelia's troubled love affair throughout the play.*
- g. Follow this pattern for each of your body paragraphs.

5. **Work on your introduction paragraph.** After you complete your 3 body paragraphs, go back to the beginning and write your introduction paragraph. Follow these steps:

- a. Start with an attention grabber or hook for your reader: *Most relationships experience hardships from time to time, and Hamlet and Ophelia from "Hamlet" are no exception to this rule.*
- b. Include background information about the author, the time period, and the text: *As one of the greatest English writers of all time, William Shakespeare showcases two struggling youths who fall in love and experience difficult times throughout the play.*
- c. Slam them with your thesis statement: *Hamlet and Ophelia's troubled love affair is driven by insanity, abnormal family dynamics, and spying.*

6. **Work on your conclusion paragraph.** After you compose your introduction paragraph, your conclusion should be the very last thing that you work on for your paper. Follow these steps:

- a. Reiterate your thesis statement: *In conclusion, Hamlet and Ophelia's troubled love affair is driven by insanity, abnormal family dynamics, and spying.*
- b. Wrap up your 3 body paragraphs and give the reader a life lesson: *Shakespeare's ability to connect audience members to the many pitfalls that affect the young lovers of Hamlet and Ophelia makes his works some of the most beloved classics of all time and speak to all ages of literature lovers.*