



The Keyhole Essay

A Guide to Expository Writing

What is the Keyhole Essay?

- ◉ Method of organizing **expository writing**
 - > [used to explain, describe, inform]
- ◉ Forces writers to be
 - > Focused
 - > Organized
 - > Clear

When will I use this?

- ALL THE TIME

- > Bluebooks/ In class essays
- > SAT essay
- > Literary analysis
- > Persuasive pieces



Characteristics of Expository Writing

- Formal

- > Third person point of view
- > No slang, clichés, or fragments

- Clear

- > Make **assertions**, not suggestions
 - **Not** “I think,” “I believe,” “In my opinion,” “Maybe,” “Probably,” etc.
 - **[[Write as if there is only one answer and it's yours]]**
- > Do not make the reader guess your meaning

The examples on the following slides are in response to the following question:

How does Harper Lee show the coexistence of good and evil in her novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*?

The Introduction: Hook



- ◉ Starts with broad, general statement
 - > **Hook**: grabs reader's attention
- ◉ Ex: "The idea of opposites coexisting is one that has existed for millennia."

The Introduction: Overview

- ◉ Begin to narrow focus
 - > Connect hook to essay topic
- ◉ Ex: “It is an idea that Harper Lee strongly presents in her novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*.“



The Introduction: Thesis

- ◎ **Thesis statement:** assertion that you will prove in the body of the text
 - > **[[It is the answer to the essay question]]**
 - > Must be arguable
- ◎ Ex: “Harper Lee shows the coexistence of good and evil in her novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* through the development of complex characters.”



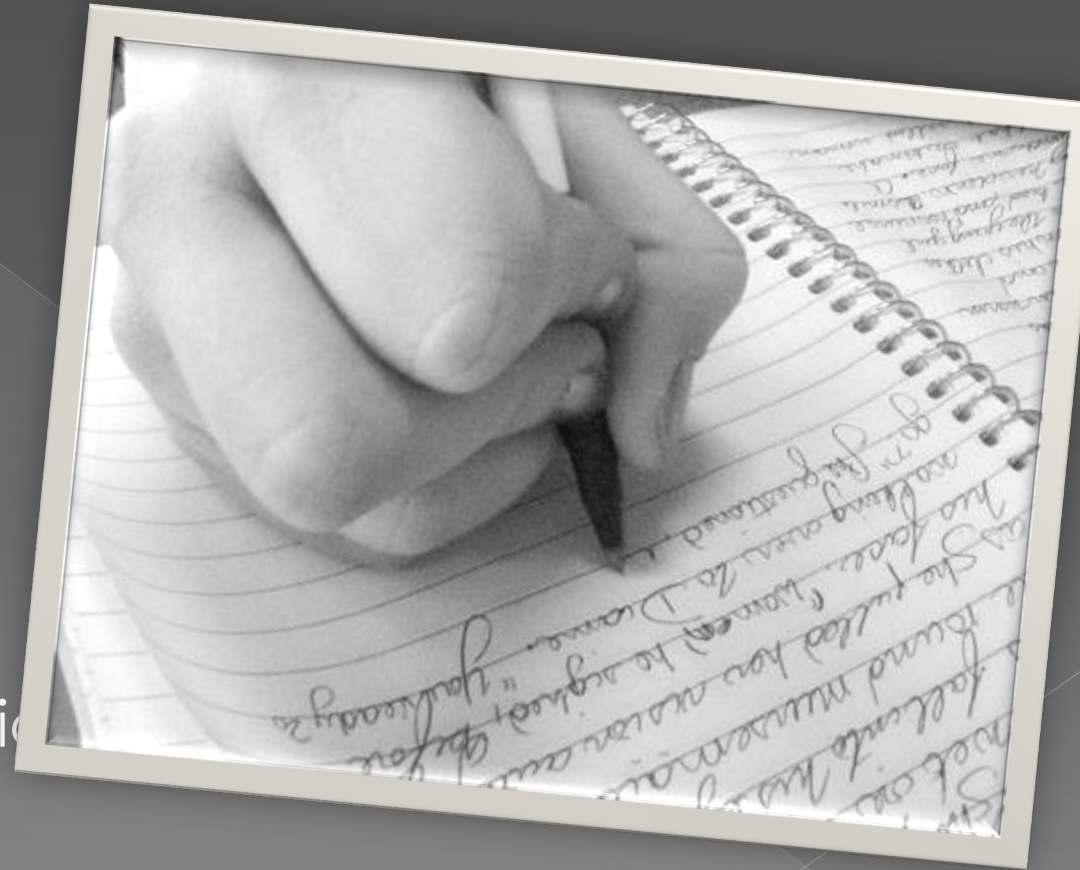
The Introduction: Preview



- ◉ **Preview:** overview of main points you will use to support your thesis argument
 - > This is your **evidence**
- ◉ Ex: “In particular, she uses the complex characters of Mrs. Dubose, Aunt Alexandra, and Mayella Ewell.”

The Body

- Overall function:
 - > to support thesis statement
- Overall format:
 - > Three main points= three main paragraphs
 - > Each paragraph focuses on a specific piece of evidence that supports your thesis



The Body: Topic Sentence

- ◉ Topic sentence (TS): first sentence of each paragraph
 - > Identifies and clarifies main point
 - > Provides focus and organization
- ◉ **Transition**: connection between previous main point and current main point
- ◉ “**In addition to Mrs. Dubose**, Aunt Alexandra is also a complex character who shows the coexistence of good and evil.”

The Body: Evidence

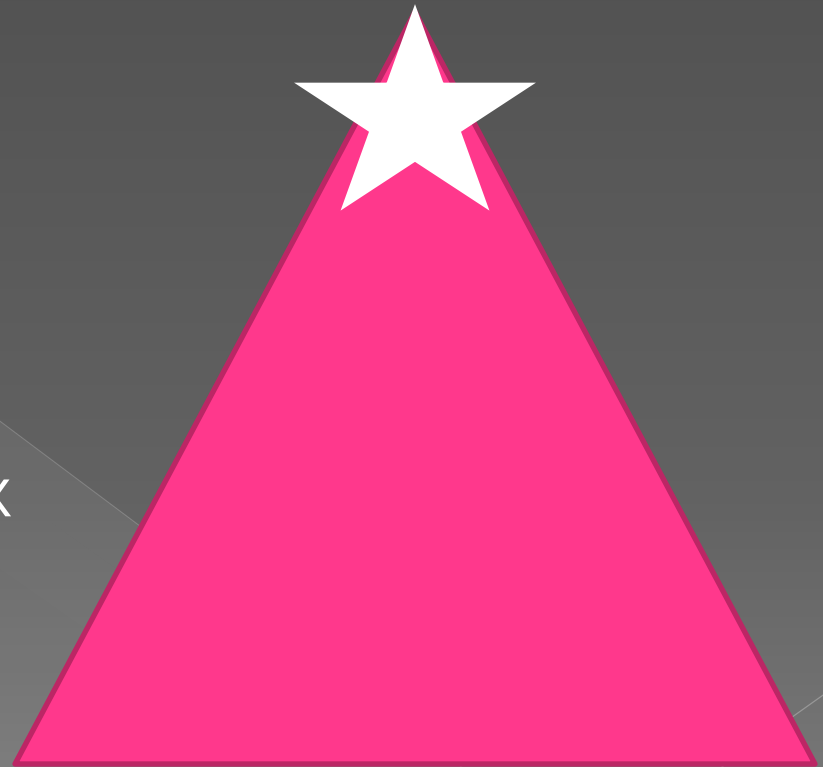
- ◉ Support your main point with evidence
 - > Start by using your own words
 - Give a general overview of the main point
 - > Use specific examples from the text (2 or 3 in each paragraph)
 - Include them, then explain why they support your main point and thesis through **analysis**
 - **[[Do not summarize the plot!]]**

The Body: Closing Statement

- ◉ Closing statement: neatly ties up your main point
 - > Refocuses the reader
 - > Aids in organization and clarity
- ◉ “Because Mayella Ewell is both abused and an abuser, she represents the coexistence of good and evil.”

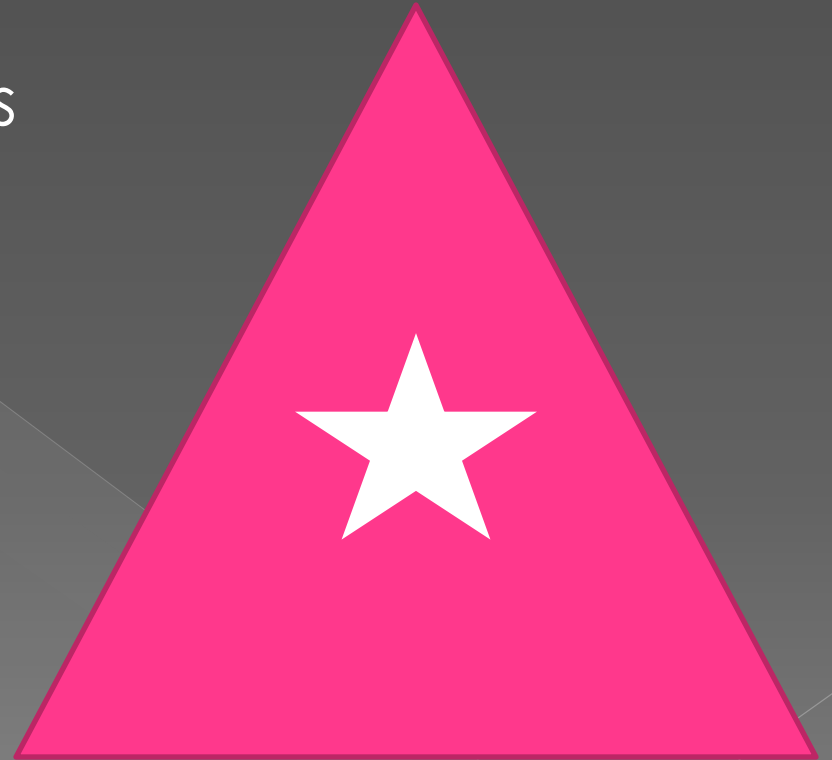
Conclusion: Thesis Echo

- ◉ Thesis echo: reworded, simplified version of thesis
 - > Refocuses reader
 - > Aids in organization
- ◉ Ex: “Through her development of complex characters, Harper Lee shows that good and evil can coexist.”



Conclusion: Restated Main Points

- Briefly revisit main points used in body paragraphs
 - > Aids in organization, clarity, and focus
- Ex: “Mrs. Dubose, Aunt Alexandra, and Mayella Ewell are the strongest examples of these types of characters as they all have good and bad qualities.”



Conclusion: Strong close

- Close should broaden the focus as did the hook
 - > Connect topic to life, world, human nature in general
 - > Strong, concise, memorable
- Ex: “Though it may be human nature to judge things as strictly good or strictly bad, rarely are things so clearly categorized.”

