

TSI Assessment WritePlacer Study Packet

WritePlacer Dimensions Checklist

Purpose and Focus - clear purpose and a consistent focus

- ✓ Communicated the issue and declared a position on the issue
- ✓ Maintained focus on that main idea throughout the essay
- ✓ Used topic-linking transitions in each paragraph

Unity

Consistency

Coherence

Relevance

Audience

Organization and Structure - strong organization of ideas

- ✓ Essay exhibits good essay form – introduction, thesis, body paragraphs, and conclusion
- ✓ Thesis statement placed at the end of the introduction
- ✓ Position is restated in conclusion
- ✓ Used transition words effectively to clarify the flow of ideas

Introduction

Thesis

Body
Paragraphs

Conclusion

Transitions

Development and Support - logically developed and well-supported

- ✓ Provided at least 3 reasons for position
- ✓ Included at least 3 supports for each paragraph's reason
- ✓ Used point-counterpoint techniques to increase effectiveness of essay
- ✓ Maintained a consistent point-of-view

Point of
ViewCoherent
Arguments

Evidence

Elaboration

Sentence Variety and Style - Shows skillful control of sentence structure and style.

- ✓ Avoided errors in subject-verb or pronoun-antecedent agreement, sentence fragments, run-on sentences and parallelism
- ✓ Avoided unnecessary repetition in the sentence
- ✓ Avoided wordy, imprecise language

Sentence
LengthSentence
Structure

Usage

Tone

Vocabulary

Voice

Mechanical Conventions - strong control of mechanical conventions such as grammar, spelling and punctuation

- ✓ Punctuated the essay correctly
- ✓ Avoided errors in spelling and capitalization

Spelling

Grammar

Punctuation

Critical Thinking - Clear and reasoned analysis of the issue

- ✓ The ideas arranged in a logical and effective sequence
- ✓ Persuaded rather than informed audience about issue

Clarity

Depth

Precision

Logic

Accuracy

Fairness

Breadth

Relevance

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Argumentation

Argumentation must be based on a controversial idea – one in which people hold different views and ideas. An argumentation paper may include some persuasion; however, it should be rational and logical, rather than emotional, and objective, rather than one-sided. A formal argument includes five components:

1. Statement of the problem
2. Solution – the writer’s thesis or answer to the problem
3. Evidence – the support the writer presents in order to prove the thesis
4. Refutation – the writer’s acknowledgement of and response to the opposing views related to the problem
5. Conclusion – the writer’s summary of the evidence, including a restatement of the thesis

Example Argumentation Essay

<p>Title: An original title – not just stating the topic</p> <p>Intro: Describes situation: defines the issue and basic terms that the essay will discuss</p> <p>Thesis Statement Follows pattern: (Noun) should (action) This thesis statement is indirect. Both direct and indirect (implied) are OK.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">"Fixing" What Isn't Broken</p> <p>Every pet owner knows that there are enormous responsibilities that go along with having a cat or dog. You must feed and exercise your pet, to keep it physically healthy; you must play with it, and keep it emotionally healthy too. You have to keep it safe from cars, people, or other animals, and you ought to protect other people, property, or pets from your own animal. There’s another responsibility that not all pet owners think about, however: spaying or neutering, or “fixing.” What does “fixing” you pet mean? Simply put, it means taking your pet to the vet for a quick, cheap surgery that will prevent your pet from ever becoming a mother or father. This surgery solves problems that pet owners know about, and some that they might not have considered before. In fact, I believe that all pet owners should be required to have their pets fixed.</p>
<p>Argument 1: Why is my claim (the one I make in the Thesis Statement) a good one? What reasons can I give to support my idea? Here I explain that (1) overpopulation of animals is a real problem, and (2) why it’s a problem (from several different points of view). I have so many details to talk about, just one argument takes a long paragraph. The paragraph ends with a</p>	<p>Everybody loves a cute new puppy or kitten. But those cute babies soon get bigger, and right now, there simply aren’t enough homes for them all. Some unwanted animals go to shelters, or “dog pounds.” These shelters are like prisons for animals, but with one important difference: many of the prisoners will never get out. Shelters have limited funds and limited space, and they cannot keep all the animals they collect. If a cat or dog is not adopted within a certain time period, that animal is killed. On the other hand, not all unwanted animals go to a shelter. What happens to a homeless animal left out on the street? Remember, our pets are exactly that - pets. They aren’t wild animals. They cannot find fresh water or hunt their own food (especially in a city). They cannot understand traffic laws, so they often get struck by cars. They are susceptible to common illnesses - illnesses that they can then spread to other animals, including pets. They are not tame, so they may attack other animals or people. In either case, the life of most unwanted animals is not long, but it is full of misery and pain, and it’s also a life that’s dangerous to pets (or people) who they meet. By not “fixing” your own animal, you will almost certainly be adding to this problem.</p>

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strong claim.	
<p>Argument 2: A totally different reason for my thesis statement. Here I talk about health, from three different points of view. The paragraph ends again with a strong claim.</p>	<p>Another thing to consider is the health of your pet itself. Animals, especially pets who eat processed foods just like we do, are prone to the same illnesses as we are, like heart disease and cancer. An animal who has been spayed or neutered is at less risk from certain kinds of cancer. Furthermore, animals who are not fixed can sometimes go crazy trying to find mates. They can injure themselves trying to escape from their homes, or they may fight with other animals when they have escaped. Of course, while running free, they are in danger from cars. And finally, for females who become mothers, we must remember that giving birth is not a safe process. For the ordinary pet owner, all these reasons should be strong enough to convince them to “fix” their dear pet.</p>
<p>Counterargument/Rebuttal 1 I give a direct quote of what my imaginary “enemy” might say. 2 ideas are combined here. This one is related to one of my arguments. I start my rebuttal immediately with a strong criticism I give a definition for the acronym S.P.C.A</p>	<p>Of course, some people will not agree with me. “I don’t want to give my animal an unnecessary surgery,” they will say. “Surgery is risky, too, and it’s certainly expensive.” That idea shows ignorance. Spaying or neutering should be done as soon as you get your pet - when he or she is young and healthy - and it is almost 100% safe. Your animal is in much more danger if not fixed, for the urge to run away from home will put your pet in extremely dangerous situations. And almost all cities have a fund to help pay for the surgery. Just ask at your vet or the local S.P.C.A. (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals). The cost can be as low as \$10.</p>
<p>Counterargument/Rebuttal 2 One idea, explained in a few different ways. This idea is completely unrelated to any of my arguments. Both ways of writing a counterargument (related to argument or unrelated) are OK it’s your choice.</p>	<p>Others might feel that this surgery will change their pet’s personality. They might think that a “fixed” dog might not be a good watchdog, for example. Or they may simply say “I like my pet the way he/she is.” This shows a basic misunderstanding of what the effects of spaying or neutering are. Your pet’s personality, like a human’s personality, is his or her own, and it won’t change after “fixing”. However, it’s true that some behaviors will change. Your pet won’t want to “mark” with urine as much, for example, and females won’t “go into heat” and tear up the house every few months. Your watchdog will still be a good watchdog, but probably won’t want to fight with other dogs as much. This simple surgery solves many behavior problems that can make an otherwise loveable pet into a monster. The best solution is simply to get your pet “fixed” as soon as you get it home, as young as possible. That way, fewer bad habits will form.</p>
<p>Conclusion: Comes back to the arguments; restates (does not repeat) the thesis statement.</p>	<p>No matter how you look at it, there’s really no valid reason not to spay or neuter your pet. Whether you consider the potential suffering of unborn animals, the health and comfort of your own pet, or your own convenience as a pet owner, you must agree that the facts all show that spaying or neutering is the way to go. It’s not only the convenient choice, but also the morally right choice, and one that all pet owners should make.</p>

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Brainstorming

What Does this Prompt Mean? Identify the Subject and the Issue

1. Using a separate sheet of paper, identify the subject.
 - a. "What is it all about?"
 - b. "What category could I put all of this under?"
2. Identify the issue by asking yourself what is being argued about related to the subject.
 - a. Try to form the issue as a question (for example, "All cats and dogs need to be spayed or neutered "can be transformed into, "Should all dogs and cats be spayed or neutered?"

Brainstorm on Both Sides of the Issue. Answering the "Why"

In order to write a strong paper, you must acknowledge both sides of the argument. Use a T-chart to brainstorm reasons for supporting both sides of the argument.

Prompt: Pet overpopulation is increasing becoming a problem of concern. Many pets are left homeless or local pet shelters are overcrowding because of this issue. Getting pets spayed or neutered is a proven solution to pet-overpopulation. However, some disagree with getting a beloved pet "fixed." Write an argumentation paper for or against spaying or neutering pets.

Subject: Cats and dogs need to be spayed or neutered

Issue: Should all dogs and cats be spayed or neutered?

Position/Thesis: Yes, all cats and dogs should be spayed or neutered.

Reasons:

Why do I think <u>all</u> cats and dogs should be spayed or neutered	Why do I think <u>not all</u> cats and dogs should be spayed or neutered
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Because spaying and neutering prevents overpopulation of cats and dogs 2. Because spaying and neutering helps cats and dogs to be more healthy 3. Because... 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Because spaying and neutering is a surgery that may cause harm to the pet 2. Because spaying and neutering may change the pet's personality 3. Because...

Prompt:

Subject:

Issue:

Position/Thesis:

Reasons:

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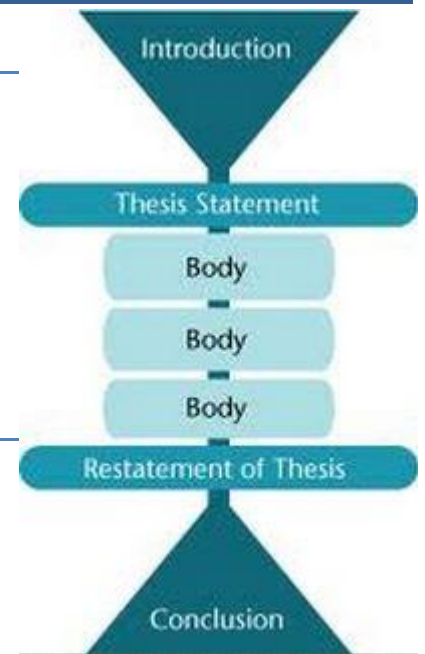
Organization

Supporting Details

1. A general rule is to include 3 supports for any “reason.”
2. Supports are facts, examples and statistics to support your reason. Supports can include
 - a. Concrete Detail – detail of any general, vague statements
 - b. Specific Examples – from personal experience or general knowledge
 - c. Incidents or Anecdotes – a brief story or incident to illustrate a point
 - d. Facts or Statistics
 - e. Quotes – from sources on both sides of the issue

Organization

1. Put only 1 main “reason” per paragraph – this defines the body paragraphs and helps to know when to begin a new paragraph.
2. Pick one reason as your strongest and most important.
3. Present your strongest reason last



Point-Counterpoint

In point-counterpoint, the writer first fairly summarizes or even partially accepts (concedes) an opponent’s argument. Then the writer refutes or counters this argument with an argument of his or her own.

This technique is effective because with it you communicate to your reader that you understand both sides of the issue. It makes you sound more credible and knowledgeable on the topic and, therefore, more believable.

Developing a Thesis Statement

No writing can communicate effectively unless it is controlled by a thesis statement. Such a statement can take many forms, but for the purpose of an argumentation paper, it will always include the following elements:

Subject + Position + Reasons

Subject
Position
Reasons

Basic example: All cats and dogs should be spayed or neutered because this prevents animal overpopulation and it helps to maintain a pet’s good health.

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Outline

An outline is a general plan of the material that is presented in a paper. It shows the order of the various topics, the relative importance of each and the relationship between the various parts.

Introduction

- Thesis Statement: _____

I. Body Paragraph 1: _____

1. Supporting Detail 1: _____
2. Supporting Detail 2: _____
3. Supporting Detail 3: _____

II. Body Paragraph 2: _____

1. Supporting Detail 1: _____
2. Supporting Detail 2: _____
3. Supporting Detail 3: _____

III. Body Paragraph 3 – **Point-Counterpoint**: _____

- I. Supporting Detail 1: _____
- II. Supporting Detail 2: _____
- III. Supporting Detail 3: _____

Conclusion

- Restatement of Thesis _____

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Introductory Paragraph

The first, or introductory, paragraph of an essay should prepare the reader for the thesis statement of the essay. So, how can a writer introduce a thesis statement effectively? Here are some ways:

- A rhetorical question
- A definition
- A description of a situation
- A brief history of the topic
- A general statement followed by a specific example
- A controversial or surprising statement
- A quotation
- A reference to a current event
- An anecdote
- A startling fact or statistic

Body Paragraphs

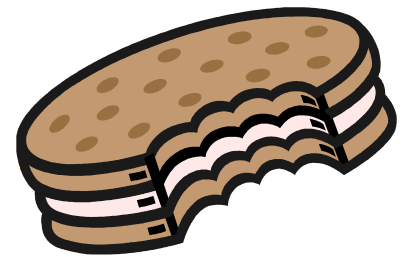
A paragraph is a group of closely related sentences developing a topic. There is no rule about the length of a paragraph. Every sentence in the paragraph, however, must help to develop one main idea.

The parts of a paragraph:

1. The beginning sentence (or **topic sentence**)
 - a. opens the paragraph;
 - b. attracts attention;
 - c. gives the content and sequence of the paragraph;
 - d. often arouses curiosity.
2. Middle sentences contribute directly to the topic sentence. They are your supporting details.
3. The ending sentence
 - a. ends the paragraph;
 - b. satisfies the reader or the listener;
 - c. may give the last fact or detail;

Remember:

- All sentences of a paragraph are related to the topic sentence.
- A paragraph should flow in a natural and logical order. Each sentence leads to the next in an orderly way so that they develop clearly and effectively into the one main idea or reason.



Paragraphs are like ice cream sandwiches - they must have a top (topic sentence), middle (supporting details) and end (ending sentence) to stay together and be delicious!

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Concluding Paragraph

The last, or concluding, paragraph should provide a satisfactory conclusion to an essay.

So, how can a writer conclude an essay effectively? Here are some ways:

- Restate the thesis statement of the essay.
- Restate the main points you've made in the essay.
- Make a prediction about your topic: What will happen next?
- Make a call to arms: tell the readers what they should do, now that they've read your essay.
- Answer the question "So what?" Why should the readers care about what you have written?
- Provide a conclusion that mirrors or complements your introduction; for example, finish or return to the scenario you presented in your introduction.
- Leave readers with a question to ponder.

Transitions

Transitional devices are the bridges between parts of your paper. They help to create both coherence and cohesion in a paper (aka "flow"), and they encourage the reader to make the connections between the writer's ideas in the way that the writer intends. Transitional devices help carry a thought from sentence to sentence, one idea to another, and one paragraph to the next.

There are several different types of transitional devices, and each type helps build a different connection between ideas. They lead the reader to connect information in the way that writer intends. Some transitions lead the reader forward and help build an idea, while others are used to show contrast or to show cause and effect, just to name a few. The repetition of key words or phrases can also help connect ideas from sentence to sentence as well as from paragraph to paragraph.

- **Showing accumulation:** also, in addition, again, once again, further, furthermore, moreover, then, besides, equally important, finally, next, lastly, what's more, similarly, likewise, not only....but also
- **Showing contrast:** however, by contrast, although, while, whereas, but, yet, on the other hand, except, by comparison, compared to, conversely, meanwhile
- **Displaying cause or effect:** because, for, since, for the same reason, evidently, consequently, thus, therefore, hence, accordingly, as a result
- **Signaling example or evidence:** for example, for instance, in this case, in another case, on this occasion, in this situation, take the case of ..., to demonstrate, to illustrate, as an illustration
- **Indicating exceptions:** yet, still, nevertheless, nonetheless, in spite of, despite, in any case, of course, once in a while, sometimes, after all
- **Showing sequence or order:** first, second, third, previously, prior to this, simultaneously, concurrently, soon, at this time, now, at this point, next, then, following this, after, afterward, finally, consequently, subsequently
- **Signaling a summary or conclusion:** in brief, on the whole, summing up, to conclude, in conclusion, as I have shown, as I have said, thus