## ESSAY/ARTICLE TERMS

**Subject**: What the essay is about.

**Prose**: Any writing that is organized into sentences (i.e. not verse).

**Thesis**: A key sentence that reflects the central idea of the entire piece of writing.

**Tone**: The writer’s attitude to the subject as conveyed through diction and style.

**Audience**: The person(s) for whom you are writing.

**Diction**: The choice of words and phrases. In literature, a term used to describe the level of language used (e.g. slang, colloquial, formal).

**Theme**: The central or dominating idea(s) in a literary work.

**Unity**: A sense of oneness in writing in which all sentences work together to develop the main idea (i.e. Theme).

**Coherence**: Putting your ideas together in such a way that the reader can easily follow from one point to the next.

**Emphasis**: Giving great importance to a particular idea in a piece of writing by placing it in a special position, by repeating a key word or phrase, or through the use of **Rhetorical devices**.

# The Opening Paragraph

The next step is to write an opening paragraph. This includes three components:

* An attention-getting opening. This could be a question, a quote, a statistic, an anecdote, or an emotional exclamation. This opening can be anywhere from two to five sentences. The goal is to catch the reader’s attention as soon as possible!
* A brief discussion of the topic. This states what you are writing about and provides some background information for the reader. This should be longer than your attention-getting opening. Allow at least one sentence per main idea.
* End the paragraph with your thesis statement.

**EXAMPLE**:

We all know the catchy tune, “I’m Lovin’ it!” But, do we really know the effects of this fast food phenomenon on our lives? In our over-worked, stressed-out, and productivity-driven society, fast food chains offer a small relief from the task of making a meal: a task that often falls to the bottom of our proverbial “to do” list. However, upon closer examination, we have to wonder if the quick trip through the McDonald’s drive-through window is actually of real benefit to us. **These days a Big Mac, large Fries and a soft drink cost upwards of $30 for a family of four. Convenient? Yes. Cheap? Definitely not. Also, a meal consumed in a car on the way to a hockey practice or dance lesson does not allow much opportunity for family members to interact or debrief from their work or school days. Finances and relationships are not all that suffer. Our bodies will also eventually pay the price for over-consumption of cholesterol and calorie-leaden food.** WHILE FAST FOOD MAY BE CONVENIENT, IT IS A MENACE TO OUR FINANCES, OUR RELATIONSHIPS, AND OUR HEALTH.

# Body Paragraphs

Body paragraphs are any paragraphs between the opening paragraph and the concluding one. Each body paragraph develops one separate point or proof used to support the essay’s main idea. A body paragraph fully expands and develops its point in the following ways:

* Begin with a topic sentence that makes a general statement about your point.
* Next, provide a specific example(s) that illustrates and proves the validity of your point.
* Once an example(s) has been provided, explain how this example(s) proves the point. Make that connection. Elaborate in detail to deepen the reader’s understanding.
* Finally, write a “clinching” or concluding sentence that summarizes the point being made in the paragraph
* Remember, all of these sentences, particularly your topic sentence and your concluding sentence should connect back to the thesis and should use similar language. Always make the connection!

**Exercise**:

Choose one of the points or proofs from the opening paragraph about fast food and then write a well-organized body paragraph to surround it.

# Closing Paragraphs

Closing Paragraphs are important for tying up any loose ends and clarifying the main points of your essay. A good closing paragraph deepens your argument because it draws a final conclusion for the reader. This is the last section of your essay that readers will read and thus remember. Therefore, it should **not** simply be a restatement of your thesis and main points in one or two sentences. Such a paragraph makes your essay appear boring, formulaic, and under-developed. A closing paragraph should still create a sense of “flow” in an essay and give readers something to think about long after they lift their eyes from the page.

**Exercise**:

Write a closing paragraph between 5-7 sentences in length based upon the opening paragraph about fast food. It should tie all the main points together and restate the thesis in a new and persuasive way. Remember to provide readers with one final thought to take away from the paragraph!