O, E, A, T: How to Write a Body Paragraph

Purpose: to structure your writing so that it is has all of the components of a logical argument in each paragraph.

Benefits:

* Improves your grade
* You can apply it to all things you read, write, and in other classes
* Flaws in other peoples’ arguments become visible
* Adds length to papers
* Answer teachers when they ask you to “say more”

Observation: basic statement of fact which requires evidence to be proven.

Evidence: a quote or paraphrase from a text (book, poem, short story, movie, etc.). These must be properly cited in MLA format. Answers someone if they say, “Prove it!”

Analysis: an explanation of the observation/evidence importance. It reconnects the points made earlier in the paragraph to your central thesis. This answers the, ”Who cares?” question.

Transition: a sentence bridging the idea of this paragraph to the next paragraph.

Examples

Kendrick Lamar engages deeper issues in his music such as racial and economic inequality (O). In fact, his album *Good Kid, m.A.A.d City* focuses heavily on victim blaming, racism, and ultimately humanizes and complicates the stereotypically simple view of L.A.’s black youth. In the song “m.A.A.d city” Lamar calls himself “Compton’s human sacrifice” displaying his waning purity in the face of destructive influences (E). Lamar’s treatment of race, class, and stereotypes uplifts his status to one of the greatest of all time or at least one of the best rappers out right now (A). However, he is not just some abstract, poet philosopher type—his albums sell like crazy (T).

People, especially teenagers, spend a great deal of time on the internet or watching TV (O). On average, American adolescents spend "6 ½ hours per day" engaging in some form of media (Arnett 338) (E). According to Worhsam, “By providing young people a resource that gives a seemingly constant flow of information, adolescents can use this information as a guide for social comparison” (E). Therefore, youth individuals develop a great deal of their identity from media influences (A). They do this through model examples of individuals, feedback on their identity choices, and negative examples of people who they would not like to be (A). While it seems like the media determines individual identity, teenagers also contribute to the media itself (T).

Obama improved the economy significantly (O). USA today writes, “The stock market has gone up for the sixth year in a row to all time highs. Obama brought unemployment down to 5% with job growth programs.” (E) Great presidents give financial stability to their country and grow wealth. Obama is arguably the best economic president and therefore must be the best U.S. president (A). While he has helped economically, he is also a diplomatic genius (T).