

Writing Cheat Sheet

Standard Paragraph Format

- **Topic Sentence: BE SPECIFIC.** Tell your teacher **EXACTLY** what you will prove in the paragraph.
- **Support**
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- **Support**
- **Conclusion:** Summarize, Transition to New Paragraph, or Analyze (better option)

Support (follow these steps for all three pieces of support in a paragraph)

- **Use a transition:** For example, Furthermore, Moreover
- **Context/Background:** Describe what's happening in the scene where the quote is taken from.
- **Transition into quote:** (strategies listed below)
- **Insert quote/Text Evidence:** Use only as much of the quote as you will be analyzing.
- **Analyze** (telling the reader how the quote supports/proves the topic sentence)
 - **Mean:** The quote in your own words (sometimes you don't need to complete this step).
 - **Matter:** Why does the quote matter? How does it support the main idea stated in the topic sentence).

Inserting Quotes

- **Colon:** You can use a colon to connect a complete background sentence to a quote that is also a complete sentence.
 - **Example:** Jr. takes his cartoons more seriously than the reader may initially think: "I use them to understand the world" (95).
- **Tagging:** Using words like "says" to introduce a character's dialogue.
 - **Example:** Jr. says, "I use them to understand the world"(95).
- **Integrating:** Fitting a background fragment into a quote fragment.
 - **Example:** Jr.'s comics are essential because he "use[s] them to understand the world" (95).
- **Chunking:** Integrating a small chunk of a quote into a sentence.
 - **Example:** Jr. relies on his comics to "understand the world" that he struggles to fit into (95).

Five-Paragraph Essay

Intro

- **Attention Step:** Hint at the thesis.
- **Background:** What does the reader need to know to understand your essay?
 - History: Background of events discussed.
 - English: Author, title, brief conflict summary mentioning only key character.
- **Thesis**

Body Paragraphs (3): Outlined Above

Conclusion

- **Restate thesis:** Same idea, different language.
- **Big Idea:** Final analysis of the topic.
- **Big Idea:** Apply final analysis beyond the topic but do not introduce an entirely new idea.

Outline Steps

- 1) Write a rough thesis.
- 2) Write all of your topic sentences. This step will make you focus your ideas, select support, and organize your main ideas.
- 3) Revise your thesis. Make it more specific to topic sentences.
- 4) Identify quotes. Place quotes under topic sentences.
- 5) Brainstorm analyses → do not write these in full sentences.
- 6) Open up a clean document and let the outline guide your writing.

