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Says and Does Exercise: TED Talk Essay Review.

Abstract

In this exercise, I examine every sentence in an essay that I wrote, looking at what was said, and how the sentence functions in supporting my essay. This essay was done with the goal of better understanding how we influence the function of our texts, and as an opportunity to practice an important exercise for use in tutorial sessions. COLLAPSE

Says: "Just do your job". The culmination of Elizabeth Gilbert's Ted Talk, "Your Elusive Creative Genius", In which Gilbert uses her success as an author to address the "disturbed artist" stereotype.

Does: Addresses the topic of the review, as well as giving context as to the subject of the TED Talk.

Says: "Just do your job" may seem like a simplistic answer for a life threatening problem, how do we change society's perception of where an artist's creativity comes from?

Does: This explains in greater detail why Gilbert's TED Talk is relevant, and where the conflict lies.

Says: Gilbert addressed the issue, saying that society has, "internalized and accepted collectively this notion that creativity and suffering are inherently linked," Perhaps a worthwhile concern for most of us entering into a creative field; how can we separate ourselves from an action that externalizes what seems like our very soul?

Does: Complicates the purpose further, provides more details about the topic. It also provides a sense of the narrator's identity to the reader. This also makes a connection between the topic of the TED talk, and the intended reader of the article, a class about writing. It may not be effective for unintended readers.

Says: Gilbert first analyzes the origins of coping measures for creative types, then follows that thread to the point in which our perception has changed.

Does: Sets up further analysis. Signals to the reader what comes next.

Says: Originally in the era of Greek and Roman rule, creative success was attributed to an external force, called a "daemon" or a "genius", neither of these terms are recognizing these as forces of good, but rather as an influencing and torturing device.

Does: This provides the reader with the historical context of the topic, providing a deeper understanding of why this issue is relevant or different today.

Says: This separation between the artist and their work allowed the artists of that time to have a psychological separation from their successes and failures.

Does: This presents the reader with the relevancy of this historical view of creativity, and what practical effects it had on past creative people.

Says: Today, a writer could have one great work and die trying to meet these past expectations; back then, the artist didn't have this psychological drive to one up themselves, because their work wasn't entirely their own.

Does: This sentence compares the public's attitude towards the subject then, to the current way that people think about creativity. This also explains the value in the previous system.

Says: Gilbert goes on to show when this coping mechanism ended, around the renaissance; when the world became centered on the individual, and great arts began to be viewed as the result of the artist alone without addressing the elusive and maddening being of inspiration.

Does: This gives a timeline of events that better allow the reader to understand when and why things changed. It also provides a sociological view towards how society has manipulated our perceptions.

Says: Breaking down the way creative artists develop their works was Gilbert's first goal, but now she is trying to re-externalize this creative force.

Does: This transitions to the solution that Gilbert provides.

Says: Similar to our most recent reading, Gilbert is calling attention to the mysterious external force that guides us.

Does: This acts as another transition, as well as contextualizing the TED Talk by comparing it to our readings at the time. Looking back on this it might be unnecessary to include the first part of the sentence, as it provides nothing for the reader.

Says: Kenneth Bruffee unknowingly examined this source of inspiration in his essay "Peer Tutoring and the Conversation of Mankind" in which Bruffee follows the path of knowledge and inspiration from its external place, conversation, to the internalization of your mind, and the re-externalization of words on the page.

Does: This sentence provides context as to how other readings may complicate and compliment the original TED talk.

Says: Both Bruffee and Gilbert come to the same conclusion, that to allow this force to work with you, instead of against you, you must first externalize these ideas, either with a peer tutor, or by addressing this "daemon" directly.

Does: This explicitly states and defines the shared “external force” that both authors were speaking of, as well as giving the reader advice on how you might externalize ideas.

Says: Externalizing these forces can protect you from this work, and protect your mind from itself.

Does: This makes a statement which provides a conclusion as to the realistic benefits of changing our outlook on the creative process.

Says: It's almost like Alain de Botton's Ted Talk on the philosophy of success, and in order to cultivate an understanding of this, you must recognize that there is an external force at play; For de Botton it was luck, for Gilbert a creative "daemon" and for Bruffee it's the act of conversation.

Does: This sentence provides an extra source that connects to the original ted talk and reading, but doesn't add much to the essay at large

Says: Without externalizing these forces, and stopping the toxic cycle of self-doubt, you're doomed to repeat history as a self-destructive creative.

Does: This reiterates the conclusion and just adds redundancy to the concluding paragraph.

I think I surprised myself with how well the essay started, and the fact that most sentences had a pretty clear function to the essay. I think that the further my writing went on, more redundancies were found that didn't contribute to my writing in a meaningful way. I think that I should practice being more aware of what my writing is doing the longer that I write. Concluding paragraphs for me, hold a lot of baggage from the days of writing 5 paragraph essays. I think that it's hard for me to avoid a concluding paragraph that just wraps in on itself and just endlessly repeats. This can be adjusted in editing or with greater self-awareness. Revisiting your work and combing through it carefully gives yourself a lot of insight into how you structure your writing, and whether or not it's effective. Cultivating the patience to review your text sentence by sentence takes time, but with practice you can develop a skill that has a big effect on how you write.