

Research Paper: Basic Structure and Citation Outline

Before you can progress in the process of writing your research paper, you must have a viable thesis and POA statement. Your thesis statement at this point should consist of both an observation **and** the importance of that observation to the greater themes/purpose of the novel.

- **Observation:** Huck is a metaphorical vampire.
- **Importance:** This allows Twain to criticize society's continued mistreatment of African-Americans who are used and discarded once their purpose has been served.

In addition to this thesis statement, your POA should consist of 2 different aspects related to your observation. For many people, this includes 2 different characters, character traits, plot events, literary techniques, etc. For my example, I will focus on different characters that are used by Huck in this vampiric sense.

- **POA:** Pap and the Duke and King

Note: In this type of lengthy paper, you will need to consider the ordering of your POA points carefully. Frequently, you'll find that your overall argument will build on itself, and that will help you determine which POA point you should put first. Likewise, the chronology of the novel, in other words, the order things happen in the book, can also be extremely important, as is the case with my example.

Sample Thesis: Huck shows himself to be an emotional vampire when he interacts with Pap and the Duke and the King, which allows Twain to criticize how society treats African-Americans.

Finalizing the Thesis/POA statement

For the final version of the thesis/POA statement, you will need to focus on doing things that at first seem contradictory: **concision** and **expansion**. Concision means that you really can't afford to be too wordy in making this statement, because you already have a lot to juggle as far as how many ideas you need to convey. Expansion means that you need to look for any assumptions that you are making and actually state them directly. In the example above, notice that I *assume* that the reader of my observation/importance will understand that I'm drawing a parallel between Huck and the society at the time. However, I can't afford to make such an assumption, and I will need to expand my final thesis statement to include that idea. Also note that I've failed to explain exactly what I mean by "emotional vampire." This is another area that I should target for expansion.

Final Thesis/POA

- Huck acts metaphorically as a vampire, sucking the life and prosperity out of other characters when it best suits him, and discarding them when he has the chance. By portraying Huck in this fashion, Twain draws a parallel between Huck and Southern society, and through Huck's interactions with Pap and the Duke and the King, criticizes the South's continued mistreatment of African-Americans.

Organizing the Paper: The Structure

You have more to juggle than in the ordinary “5” paragraph essay, so you won’t quite be able to limit yourself to a strict 5 paragraphs. The basic philosophy behind the structure you will use is the following idea, which will be helpful to you for any number of college research papers you might have to complete.

Before you can show why something is important, you have to prove that it exists.

In other words, before you can discuss the importance of Huck being a metaphorical vampire, you have to prove he is one. With that in mind, here is your new structure which will give you more time to accomplish these two tasks:

Basic Structure:

Introduction

Body Paragraph 1 Observation, POA Point 1: 3 Ob Quotations

Body Paragraph 2 Observation, POA Point 2 3 Ob Quotations

Body Paragraph 3 Importance, 3 Importance Quotations

Conclusion

More details:

As you can see, you will spend 2 body paragraphs discussing each POA support point that you have for your argument. In the first body paragraph for each POA point), you will be presenting evidence that supports your basic **observation** you have made about the novel. In the second body paragraph for that POA point you will be explaining the **importance** of that observation to the novel. In other words, your structure becomes something like this:

- Introduction
- Body Paragraph 1—Evidence for Observation as seen through POA point 1
- Body Paragraph 2—Evidence for Observation as seen through POA point 2
- Body Paragraph 4—Importance of Observation to novel
- Conclusion

Organizing your Research

Observation Proof: Hopefully, you understand that the most authentic way to prove your **observation**, is by using what we call *primary text* evidence; in this case, that means direct quotations or references to the novel Huckleberry Finn. It is at this point, that you will become very happy that you have marked up your copy of Huck Finn, and know where to locate important quotations. Additionally, you may also have uncovered some critical essays that offer commentary that would help you prove your observations. This *secondary text* evidence can be used in proving your observation as well.

Step 1: Now, it's time to lay it all on the table—literally. For this next step, you will need access to a large, clear space. You need to visualize your paper and begin placing your quotation notecards under the category and paragraph they will ultimately fall under.

I recommend setting up the table/floor in the following way:

POA Point 1	POA Point 2
<p>Observation</p> <div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div></div> </div>	<div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <p>Observation</p>
<p>Importance</p> <div> <div></div> <div></div> </div>	

<div style="display: flex; flex-wrap: wrap;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 30px; margin: 5px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 30px; margin: 5px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 30px; margin: 5px;"></div> </div>	
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*Cards that don't seem to fit
anywhere*

Warning: Before undertaking this process, those of you who live with dogs, cats, or small children (especially cats!) will want to make sure that they are somewhere else! My cat would wait until I had everything arranged perfectly, then run through and shred the whole stack.


Step 2: Evaluation Once you have them set up, evaluate your cards. Can you make this paper work with the quotations that you have, or do you need to hit the research again to fill out someplace where you have an obvious gap? Obviously this is a better time to realize that you need to do more research rather than the night before the outline is due. If you need more support, get back to the research.










Step 3: Eliminating Cards/Citations Before you can begin the process of eliminating cards, you need to know what the rules are for the minimum and maximum number of citations in the research paper. Here are the guidelines for each paragraph type:

- Introduction:
 - Requirement: No citations required
 - Limitations: 1 citation maximum Either primary or secondary
- Observation Body Paragraph:
 - Requirement: 3 citations; minimum of 2 primary (from Huck Finn)
 - Limitations: No more than 1 citation from a secondary source
- Importance Body Paragraph:
 - Requirement: 3 citations from secondary sources (critical essays)
 - Limitations: No more than 3 citations from secondary sources
- General Requirements:
 - Minimum of 4 citations from Huckleberry Finn

- Maximum of 3 citations from critical sources

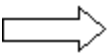
Now that you know the guidelines, it’s time to revisit your cards on the table/floor and do some more careful consideration of your sources. Ultimately, you’ll want to come up with something like this:

Quotation I might want to use in my intro 
 (Source 7)

POA Point 1	POA Point 2
Observation  HF (Source 1)  HF  Source 2	Observation HF   HF  HF
Importance  Source 3   Source 4, Source 5	



Cards that don’t seem to fit



anywhere

Once you have established a viable progression to your paper, number your cards in the order that you plan on using them in your paper.

Sample Citation Outline

Thesis: Huck acts metaphorically as a vampire, sucking the life and prosperity out of other characters when it best suits him, and discarding them when he has the chance. By portraying Huck in this fashion, Twain draws a parallel between Huck and Southern society, and through Huck's interactions with Pap and the Duke and the King, criticizes the South's continued mistreatment of African-Americans.

Introduction:

"Blah"(Campbell 14).

Body Paragraph 1 (Observation POA 1- Pap)

"Blah" (2).

"Blah" (27).

"Blah" (Austen 42).

Body Paragraph 2 (Observation POA 2- Duke and King):

"Blah" (51).

"Blah" (55).

"Blah" (62).

Body Paragraph 3(Importance):

They said blah things (Miller 124-125).

"Blah" (Craig 81).

"Blah Blah Blah" (Arevelo 33)

Conclusion