Generic Thesis Essay Outline

Introductory Paragraph

A. Hook - Introduce the broad subject of your essay using a lead-in statement. Lead-in statements may

(1) make a striking assertion,

(2) provide an anecdote or example that helps to illustrate your subject,

(3) use an interesting detail, statistic, or quote, or

(4) ask a provocative question (but go easy on the question technique. It can become annoying).

B. Background information about the work of literature - This section should present information that informs your audience about the work of literature you're discussing in terms of your broad subject. Don't forget to include the title of the work and the author's name!

C. Thesis statement - This is your answer to the prompt/essential question posed in the original assignment. This statement will sometimes contain a blueprint of the points your essay will discuss in the body paragraphs but should avoid direct repetition (because that's boring).

*** (Transition word) Body Paragraph 1: Topic sentence (ties to thesis)**

A. Introduce quotation/evidence - Who is speaking and what is going on in the plot?

B. Quotation from the text/evidence - What part of the text proves your point?

C. Discussion of your evidence - How does the evidence support the topic sentence/thesis statement? NOTE: Be sure to discuss each quote when you provide it in your essay! This is where you show your understanding of the text.

D. Punch sentence - This sentence clarifies the paragraph's relation to the thesis statement and purpose of the paper as a whole. It should answer these questions: "How is this paragraph's point important to my paper?" and "Why did I just tell all this to my reader?" Be sure it "points" back to the topic idea (which, of course, points back to the thesis. **Again, avoid direct repetition.**

*** (Transition word) Body Paragraph 2: Topic sentence (ties to thesis)**

A. Introduce quotation/evidence

B. Quotation from the text/evidence -

C. Discussion of your evidence -

D. Punch sentence -

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*** (Transition word) Body Paragraph 3: Topic sentence (ties to thesis)**

A. Introduce quotation/evidence -

B. Quotation from the text/evidence -

C. Discussion of your evidence -

D. Punch sentence -

(Repeat this paragraph structure as many times as necessary)

***Concluding Paragraph**

A. Restatement of thesis statement - The concluding paragraph should include a general summary statement that recaps but does not exactly repeat the thesis.

B. Restatement of main points - Sentences that restate the major points of argument presented in the body paragraphs (but avoid boring repetition).

C. Extension - Also known as a "so what?": connects the work you've done in the paper to greater life truths or bigger ideas.

CLOSING POINTS:

**Points highlighted in yellow are the "bones" of your argument. Complete them FIRST.

**If your paragraph has more than one piece of evidence, you will probably repeat this section, starting with a transition:

(transition) A. Introduce quotation/evidence -

B. Quotation from the text/evidence -

C. Discussion of your evidence -

. . . as many times as necessary, and then conclude with your punch sentence.

••Remember that as you become more comfortable with the conventions and goals of the "well-reasoned argument," you should/will/may break away from strict adherence to this structure!