# Paragraph organization and Development

**The T.E.A. &**

**Transitions Paragraph**

### T

Topic

### **A** E

Analysis Evidence

**When you think of paragraphs, think of T.E.A.**

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| **T = TOPIC** | * The **TOPIC** sentence tells the reader what the paragraph will be about. * It should be an arguable statement. * Your reader should be able to predict what your paragraph is about based on the topic sentence.   *T – My theory is that everything regarding who you are, from your love of history to your impeccable fashion sense, is based on how you have been socialized.* |
| **E = EVIDENCE** | * **EVIDENCE** is used to support/develop the point. * Quotations, examples, statistics, proof, anecdotes, data, supporting material.   *E – As an example, The bank of England required their female employees to wear heels and makeup, in an effort to make them appear more “feminine” in 2009 (Huffington Post).* |
| **A = ANALYSIS** | * Explains why the evidence is significant - don’t assume the reader knows the conclusions you want them to draw. * The **ANALYSIS** often illustrates a specific perspective on the evidence * In a longer essay, the **ANALYSIS** often ties the evidence to the thesis of the paper, to the larger argument * The **ANALYSIS** answers the question – SO WHAT?   *A - TEA paragraphs are not only important for academic writing, but will help you organize your arguments during debate and caucus in the conference. This one simple structure includes everything you need to build a solid argument.* |

**T.E.A. Activity # 1**

**These sample paragraphs are from real student essays.**

**Part 1 Directions:** Bracket andidentify the T, E, and A in the following paragraph. This student was writing about the truth of war for a soldier.

Race and racism have a huge impact on our lives, whether we acknowledge it or not. White people have been given an unacknowledged privilege known as white privilege. At the same time we’re being given these “gifts,” our brains are filing away the records of receiving them so that we don’t notice the unfairness of white privilege. The article “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,” by Peggy McIntosh, defines this benefit; “White Privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, blank checks and pre-earned respect.” This sack of privileges is something whites often subconsciously count on daily. When I read this I realized on a personal level how true this was and I was shocked. I had no idea about all the privileges we receive regularly. Many white people believe racism doesn’t affect them because they are a dominant race. Admitting the problem can fix it, however the people who are overprivileged won’t admit it, because by doing so they are confessing guilt. Recognizing the unfair divisions of society emphasizes the problem and the need to change. Amongst the things we’ve been socialized to do, we’ve been socialized to deny the need for change.

Our social system can be both good and bad, but sometimes the bad things can be pretty overpowering. What I learned about the negatives really changed my perspective on how we are living today. From *The Complexity of Identity* by Beverly Tatum: “Other people are the mirror in which we see ourselves.” For example, I am influenced by the media and wear clothes I see there and act whichever way others do at the time. If I don’t follow these norms and decide that I don’t want to wear my hair that way even though it is the way I “should”, I get weird glances and mean body language pointed at me. This is how we enforce our social norms. We would be nothing if we didn’t have other people to looks at to help us find ourselves. But yet we have created a picture of the perfect person that is reinforced over and over by the media which we can never reach. No person on this earth can achieve the flawlessness of a person created in Photoshop. And yet we still strive to achieve it. There is now a thought put into everyone’s head when they look at supermodels or actors that they are not perfect, they are not beautiful and they are not fashionable. This happens because the bar is simply set too high. We can never be like or heroes because our heroes aren't real. They are a façade of makeup and plastic surgery that we just can’t reach. Instead, we might turn to each other for someone to look up to. This is how I was socialized to fit the norms of being a girl, from observing others.