

# 12<sup>the only</sup> 1/2 writing rules you'll ever need

1. If you write every day, you get better at writing every day. ⇌
2. If it's boring to you, it's boring to your reader. ⇌
3. Get a writing routine, and stick with it. ⇌
4. Poetry does **NOT** have to rhyme. Poetry does not **NOT** have to rhyme. ⇌
5. Resist stereotypes, in real life and in your writing. ⇌
6. Writers read. Writers read a lot. Writers read all the time. ⇌
7. Make lists of your favorite words and books and places and things. ⇌
8. There doesn't always have to be a moral to the story. ⇌
9. Always bring your notebook. Always bring a spare pen. ⇌
10. Go for walks. Dance. Pull weeds. Do the dishes. Write about it. ⇌
11. Don't settle on just one style. Try something new! ⇌
12. Learn to tell both sides of the story. ⇌
- 12 1/2. Stop looking at this poster. **Write something!**

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**Writer's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

# MEL-CON:

## MEL stands for Main Idea, Evidence, Link / Con stands for Concluding Statement

The writing process involves prewriting, composing, evaluating, revising, and finally editing. Mel-Con is simply an EASY way for you to remember the important steps of writing a strong BODY PARAGRAPH – on any topic!!

### M - Main Idea (your argument or claim)

This is what you intend to prove in your paragraph stated in a very **direct** and concise way. (Keep it simple!!)

- Should answer question posed in one sentence.
- Should NOT start with “yes” or “no” even though you are answering a question!
- Sets up the paragraph.

### E - Evidence (example)

This is how you will prove your Main Idea. Use “One time” examples, facts, reasons or quotes to prove the point you have stated you will prove. In other words, be specific! Be complete! Stick to your point!

You must also make certain that this information moves along smoothly with ...**TRANSITIONS** (See additional list!) Evidence

- Should always be prefaced by a **transition**.
- Should prove only the main idea – nothing else
- Should use information observed or measured (by your or someone else.) \*\* QUOTES would fit in this category!
- The “stuff” you learned about the topic.
- Should **not** be choppy.
- Should not ignore important evidence which could disprove main idea.
- Should define words that are not clear.
- Is something that is *common*. Anyone can find and use it.

### L -Link (explanation)

This explains what your evidence has proven about your MAIN IDEA in one or two concise sentences.

- Explains how the evidence supports your topic.
- The link is what you think or how you relate the evidence to the topic.
- Should move the reader *beyond* the main idea.
- Your link is unique. It shows your thought processes and why you chose the evidence you chose.

### CON – Conclusion (wrap-up!)

The last sentence of the paragraph should be a conclusion; a sentence that wraps everything up and gives your paragraph closure. This should once again stress (but reword) your first claim or main idea.

- The last sentence of your paragraph that summarizes your answer, your evidence.
- Mentions your three pieces of evidence again in a new, short way.

# MEL-Con Step-by-Step

## *Did Oedipus deserve his final fate? Why or why not?*

**Step 1:** Answer the question with a statement.

- do not start with "I think" or "I feel" or "I believe"
- do not start with YES or NO

*Oedipus deserved his final fate of being exiled from Thebes and living his life as a blind man.*

**Step 2:** Identify your main idea.

*Oedipus deserved his final fate of being exiled from Thebes and living his life as a blind man.*

Now for each example you give, you must link it back to the fact that he deserved his tragedy. (explain)

**Step 3:** Identify your first evidence that you think supports your main idea.

*Oedipus was warned by the gods that he would marry his mother and kill his father, yet he tempted this fate by getting married to Jocasta and killing some men on the road to Thebes.*

**Step 4:** Add a transition to your evidence.

*The first example from the play that supports this is that Oedipus was warned by the gods that he would marry his mother and kill his father, yet he tempted this fate by getting married to Jocasta and killing some men on the road to Thebes.*

**Step 5:** Repeat the previous two steps, find another example and link it.

*The next part of the play that supports was the fact that Oedipus himself made the law to exile the person who killed King Lauis. So, when it is discovered Oedipus was the one who killed him, he had to stick to his own law and exile himself He deserved the punishment because he made it.*

*The final reason comes from the part when Oedipus promised the people of Thebes that he would find a way to rid them of the plague. The gods said that the plague would be gone when the murderer was found. Oedipus deserved his fate because he promised his people he would help them; he must remain a man of his word or his city-state would be doomed.*

**Step 7:** End your paragraph by transitioning to a concluding statement that wraps up your ideas.

*So, it is clear that Oedipus got what he deserved. He tempted his fate when he killed and married anyway, he made the law to be exiled in the first place, and he promised to save his people from the plague and that was the only way he could keep his word.*

# TRANSITIONS

## Use transitions to separate examples within a paragraph.

FIRST (to replace the overused "first")

- One good example is
- An interesting fact is
- First of all
- Initially
- One piece of evidence that points to this is
- It is important to note that
- The first good piece of evidence is
- One way to look at this is through
- One example that proves this is
- One example that suggests this is
- There are several examples that show this and one of them is
- First and foremost
- A good first example of this is
- It is important to first note that
- One notable example is
- The first indication of this is
- To begin with
- When looking over the evidence, it is clear that the first...
- One reason is
- One way this is true is
- In the beginning
- On one hand, there is
- A great example is
- One example that stands out is
- Probably the best example to begin (start) with is
- The best place to start is with
- This can first be seen when
- For example
- For instance
- The first instance that comes to mind is when...
- This can be clearly seen first of all when...

These are only some generic examples. Transitions can be more specialized around your own topic as well.

EXAMPLE: You are writing a paper on the "NO HAT POLICY." You can "customize" your transitions like this: A good first example of the hat policy in action was when.....

## SECOND (to replace the overused “second”)

- Another good example is
- Another interesting fact is
- Second of all
- Secondly
- Furthermore
- A great second example is
- Another good piece of evidence is
- Another way to look at this is through
- Another example that proves this is
- Another example that suggests this is
- Another great example that helps support this is
- Second and even more importantly
- The second good example is
- Yet another good reason (example) is
- Yet another piece of evidence is
- Another indication of this is
- Still
- Even so
- In the same way
- Next
- The next example (idea, reason, piece of evidence)
- On the other hand, there is
- Even more compelling is
- Another example that stands out is
- Similarly
- Likewise
- Along with that, there is
- Moreover
- In addition
- Adding to that
- In addition to that
- Still another great example is
- Then again, another stronger example is
- Of course
- Also
- In the same light
- Even more interesting is
- Adding to the first example is
- Making an even stronger case is
- An even better example of this is
- Equally as interesting was
- While the first example is good, an even better one is
- To add even more fuel to the fire
- To add another even more interesting fact
- An additional fact is
- Another strong indication was when
- Another quote that supports this is

## THIRD or FINAL (to replace the overused “third” and “finally”)

- A final example (fact, reason)
- And finally
- Lastly
- Last of all
- A final great example is
- The third and final example is
- The final good piece of evidence is
- The best way to look at this is through
- The final example that proves this is
- The last example that suggests this is
- The last (final) example that helps support this is
- Third and even more importantly
- The third good example is
- Yet the best reason (example) is
- The last (final) indication of this is
- Most compelling is
- Even so
- The best and final reason is
- On top of that
- The last example (idea, reason, piece of evidence)
- Best of all
- The final example to note
- The last example that stands out is
- Most importantly
- Accordingly
- Along with the first two examples, there is
- Moreover
- In addition to the first two
- Adding to those
- In addition to those
- Still another great example is
- Then again, the strongest example is
- Of course
- But most conclusive is
- In the same light
- A perfect final reason (example, fact) is
- Adding to the first two examples is
- Making an even stronger case is
- An even better example of this is
- The last place this can be seen is when
- While the first two examples are good, an even better one is
- To add even more fuel to the fire
- To add a final, even more interesting fact
- A good way to really show this is true is
- This is best seen in the part when
- Yet the best quote that shows this is

## IN CONCLUSION (the “CON” part of MEL-Con)

to replace the overused “in conclusion” or “all in all” at the end of a paragraph

- So, it is clear to see that
- Summing this whole thing up
- Accordingly
- In summary
- Consequently
- Thus
- As a result
- In short
- Therefore
- So
- The evidence clearly points
- All of this together means
- Put it all together and
- The best way to sum it up is
- With all of this
- The three examples,....., prove that....
- And so therefore
- For all of these reasons,....., one can see that.....
- This all adds up to one conclusion
- So, when studying all of the reasons
- With all of this in mind
- Due to all of these reasons
- Together
- One can see that
- The evidence is clear
- No one can argue that
- And so it is
- Yes, it is evident that
- Truly
- To reemphasize
- To repeat
- Again
- Indeed
- Of course
- There is no doubt that
- There is no argument that
- With all of these examples
- In total
- When looking at all of the possibilities
- Clearly
- Yes, it is true then
- So, when looking at the facts, it is evident that

# MEL-Con Multi-Paragraph Essay

## The 5 Paragraph Essay

### A Graphic Organizer to help you write the best essays possible

#### Paragraph #1 **The Introduction**

- **Attention Getter:** Use one of the five methods of writing an introduction (background info, your thoughts on the topic, real life example, creative example, personal experience)
- **Connector:** Connects your attention getter to your thesis.
- **Thesis statement** (this is what you're going to talk about in the rest of the essay)
- **Summary** of the main ideas of your body paragraphs (sets up the essay)

#### Paragraph #2 **First Body Paragraph**

- Use **MEL-Con format**
- Use your weakest point in this paragraph

#### Paragraph #3 **Second Body Paragraph**

- Use **MEL-Con format**
- Use your 2<sup>nd</sup> weakest point in this paragraph
- Use the MEL-Con paragraph organizer

#### Paragraph #4 **Third Body Paragraph**

- Use **MEL-Con format**
- Use your best or strongest point in this paragraph
- Use the MEL-Con paragraph organizer

#### Paragraph #5 **The Conclusion**

- Use a transition: **AVOID** using "IN CONCLUSION" OR "ALL IN ALL"
- **Summarize** your three points from body paragraphs
- **Thesis:** Restate your thesis in a different way --- a "final" conclusion
- **Attention Getter Loop:** Tie back to your introduction!!! Say something more about your introduction's attention getter.
- **Clincher:** Ask the question, "So what?" about your thesis. Answer it here by saying something important, interesting, provocative.

# Thesis Worksheet: THE AMAZING THESIS WORKSHEET

- A "thesis" is the point of your essay, the idea you wish to explain and defend.
- A "thesis sentence" is the sentence in your essay that presents your thesis. Duh!
- By doing this worksheet you will develop an outrageously wonderful thesis sentence.

There are zillions of ways to write a good thesis sentence, but, in general, a thesis contains three elements: a qualification, a general reason why your thesis is valid, and the exact position you are presenting.

Read the directions, read the examples, and fill in the blanks. It'll be fun, you'll see. . .

## Step One: The Topic

The "topic" of your essay is the general category your essay is about. If in her or his wise and loving way, your teacher has gazed into your soul and assigned you a topic, just note the example below and fill in the blank.

If in his or her cute and sparkly manner, your teacher has winked knowingly and told you to write about "anything", then you must decide on a topic. What do you have an opinion about? What are some things that interest you?

Topics are just general categories--school, fishing, parenting, hunting, cars, women's rights, racial issues, the law, etc...

Example of a Topic: **School**

Observe and enjoy the clever way I develop my thesis along with you.

Write your topic: \_\_\_\_\_

## Step Two: The Position

What is one thing about your topic that you believe to be true and that you wish to argue? You may already have a "position" in mind, or you may just have a general topic you know you wish to work with. If you do not yet have a position, making a cluster or a map with your topic in the center. This is a good way to help you find a position

Another good way is to begin a free write: "I'm supposed to write an essay about \_\_\_\_\_ . . ." and see where it takes you. However you get there, write a short statement describing your position in the space below.

Program's Example of a Position: **Schools have too many people in them!**

## Step Three: The Qualification

- Is what you say always true always?
- Are there exceptions?
- Are there good reasons why your position may have a down side?
- How can you make your position have a reality check?
- What problems may your position have that you can admit up front?

To make absolute statements usually causes your essay's thesis to seem foolishly simplistic. Get real!

Here's a trick: begin your qualification with a word like "although" or

"It is true that. . ." Don't worry if it's not a complete sentence.

Example Qualification: **Although schools of over a thousand students have flourished in America. . .**

Write your qualification in the space below.

### Step Four: The Reason

- In general, why do you believe your position to be correct in spite of your qualification?
- What is the over all good to be gained by agreeing with your position?

This is a general statement; your specific reasons will follow in the body of your essay.

Example of a reason: **Small school populations lend themselves to building a good community of learners.**

Write your reasons in the space below.

### Step Five: Put them all together.

In one or two sentences, present your thesis, including a qualification, a reason, and a position.

The classic, traditional way of combining is to first present your qualification. This immediately demonstrates your interest in accuracy. Then present your general reason that demonstrates your thinking process, and finally the punch line--your position.

Notice how in the example the qualification comes first, then the reason and finally the position that has become a specific recommendation.

Example Thesis: **Although schools of over a thousand students have flourished in America, small school populations lend themselves to building a good community of learners, and therefore we should consider limiting school populations to a hundred.**

Write your thesis in the space below.

**You're done!**

# The Introduction: How do I begin?

**5 Methods** that work for writing an introduction for your expository or persuasive essay that will “WOW” your readers and catch their interest!

## **Method #1: Background Information**

- works best for literary analysis papers: provide general synopsis, overview of story, book, play you’re writing about
- for nonliterary papers, you provide general information about your topic: you can include interesting facts, statistics, history about the topic

## **Method #2: Anecdotal / Similar Story or Situation**

- find a real life story (a narrative works well) that relates to your topic
- use famous or not so famous stories from the news, tv, magazines
- read the narrative or story and use a summary of it for your introduction
- use actual names and places and dates

## **Method #3: Personal Experience**

- tell about an experience in your own life that relates to the topic
- tell a story about someone you know that relates...a friend, relative who had an experience that relates to the topic
- it is important to give an honest account of what happened / use “I”

## **Method #4: Your Thoughts / Opinions on the Issue**

- give your personal feelings about the issue you are addressing
- tell exactly how you feel about the topic in a broad sense
- you use “I” for this type of intro
- EX: your topic is smoking, give your feelings about the idea of smoking

## **Method #5: Creative Example / Hypothetical Situation**

- create a possible scenario or story with “made up” people, characters
- describe what “happened” or “can happen” to your character(s)
- relate the story you create to your topic
- admit in your intro that your situation is hypothetical, made-up

## ***Alternative Techniques to begin your essay***

- Use an emotionally charged word in your main idea
- Highlight a revealing quote from a character in a book or story
- Cite a quote from a quotation dictionary which treats a key topic in your essay (check out quotations.com )
- Make a play on words or refer to a well-known saying
- Create a striking visual image or symbol
- Select a line from a song or poem that relates to topic
- Suggest an ingenious figure of speech
- Narrate a typical, illustrative anecdote (see method #5)
- State a startling statistic or fact
- Intrigue your audience with an unexpected irony or paradox
- Make an historical reference or literary allusion
- Sketch a distinctive character portrait

# Sample Introductions and Body Paragraph

## Background Information

The play Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare dramatizes the events leading up to and following the assassination of the great Roman leader Julius Caesar. The play begins one month before his assassination by the ancient Roman senators, namely the jealous Cassius and Caesar's best friend Brutus. The play gives a glimpse into the conspiracy to assassinate Caesar; it then goes on after the event that took place on the Ides of March and shows how it led to the downfall of Brutus as civil war breaks out with Antony and Octavius fighting for power and revenge after Caesar's death. Throughout the play, several characters are affected by inner conflict because of the events that took place. One such character is Brutus. Brutus's internal struggles are caused by his own personality flaw of being overconfident and too trusting.

## Your thoughts on the issue

Inner conflict can be caused by so many events and people around us. Often times we do not ask to be worried or upset or confused, but we are thrown into these states because of what someone else does or doesn't do. For example, a mother struggles with her teenager not because she doesn't love or trust him, but because the kid does something out of the ordinary that causes her to worry or upsets her. Perhaps she finds out he is doing drugs or she learns that his grades have slipped. Whatever the case may be, the mother is faced with inner conflict because of the actions of her child. The same type of thing happens in the play Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare. Throughout the play, several characters are affected by inner conflict because of the actions or nonactions of other characters. One such character is Brutus. Brutus's internal struggles are caused by the actions and nonactions of the people around him including his best friend Caesar, his fellow senator Cassius, and his rival Marc Antony.

## Similar Story

The events that took place on September 11, 2001 in New York City and Washington D.C. left Americans shocked, upset, and angry. So many lives were lost because of the actions of terrorists. Additionally, many more lives were affected because of the newfound worry about traveling in a plane or working in a high rise building. No one asked to have all of this inner strife, but rather it was forced upon everyone in the nation because of someone else. The same type of thing happens in the play Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare. Throughout the play, all of Rome and several individuals are affected by inner conflict because of the actions of others. One such character is Brutus. Brutus's internal struggles are caused by the actions of the people around him including his best friend Caesar, his fellow senator Cassius, and his rival Marc Antony.

## Personal Experience

When I was a freshman, one of my friends from middle school started hanging out with "the wrong crowd." I know he was doing drugs and stealing merchandise from various stores such as Target and Walgreens. He often bragged to me about these new friends and the trouble they loved to cause. For me, all it did was make me worry about my friend. He used to be so nice and good and smart, but now he was doing things I did not approve of. I fought with this in my head for a long time; eventually, I finally decided to tell his parents and my parents about it since I knew them and trusted them so much. This year, my friend is at a special school in Phoenix, AZ getting help. So far he is doing well, and I am glad he might end up being okay. My struggle and eventual intervention in this situation has, so far brought about something positive. The same type of thing happens in the play Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare. In the play, Brutus has trouble sleeping because of his concern for his friend Caesar and the fact that Caesar was wanting too much power and would eventually take over Rome as king. Because of his internal conflict, he eventually helps to assassinate his friend; he does this for the right reasons, just as I did with my friend, but his results, unlike mine, were very negative for all of Rome and especially for the people Brutus loved.

## Example of Body Paragraph Using MEL-Con

One character who ends up with internal conflict because of the actions or nonactions of another character is Portia. One example of this is when Portia asks Brutus to "Tell me your counsels, I will not disclose them." She wants to know why Brutus is up all night. He responds to her by saying that "by and by thy bosom shall partake the secrets of my heart." His refusal to tell her at the moment causes more worry and grief for Portia. His nonfiction of not sharing his secrets with his wife creates undo stress for her. Another point in the play where Portia is the victim of undo conflict from Brutus comes from his actions. After Brutus kills Caesar, he flees Rome and goes off to Asia Minor for war. Brutus explains that "Impatient of my absence, and grief that young Octavius with Mark Antony have made themselves so strong. . . she fell distract and . . .swallowed fire." This part of the play shows the ultimate inner conflict for Portia. Because of her husband's actions, she commits suicide, demonstrating her strong conflict inside. She didn't know what else to do. So, Portia becomes one of the innocent characters in the play to suffer from internal conflict not because of her own actions, but because of the nonfiction and action of her husband Brutus.

## The Conclusion: Okay, so how do I end this essay?

Now that you have your AWESOME introduction written using one of the five methods, plus your two, three, or four PERFECT MEL-Con body paragraphs, it is time to end your essay with a BANG!

Your conclusion should recap your ideas presented in your introduction and body paragraphs...but more importantly, it needs to "pack a punch" to leave the reader with a lasting impression.

### And how do I do that?

An effective conclusion contains all of these elements:

- ❖ Start with a Transitional Statement or Phrase.
  - Open your final paragraph with a good statement or phrase that will sort of "reintroduce" your topic.
  - AVOID: "All in all" or "In conclusion" or "Finally" or "To sum it all up." These are overused, cliché, and boring.
  - Try phrases like:
    - And so ----- are undoubtedly the most important....
    - There is no doubt that....
    - It is evident that -----perform so many....
- ❖ Restate Your Thesis.
  - You can do this in the above statement as a transition.
  - Use new wording for the thesis---say it in a fresh, new way.
- ❖ Include References from each Previous Paragraph.
  - Choose an example from each body paragraph to "mention" again. You don't need all of the examples, just one from each point as a reminder.
- ❖ Finally, and most importantly, tie your conclusion back to your introduction.
  - You can:
    - make a conclusion about it,
    - comment further on it,
    - give a solution,
    - tell more of the story,
    - mention a lesson learned from it,
    - compare it to the examples,
    - mention how it would have or could have been different

Be careful of the boring, typical conclusion.

# Student Graded Paper: Criteria for Grading

## Instructions

- Read the essay in its entirety first.
- You MUST justify the grade you give your peer's essay.
- This is NOT meant to destroy someone's grade. Be reasonable yet honest.

## **INTRODUCTION**

- 5 I can identify the method you used  
3 The intro is decent but the method you used isn't clear  
1 Your introduction confuses me

## **THESIS**

- 5 I can identify your thesis and it sets up your essay well  
3 Your thesis is decent but doesn't set up rest of essay  
1 Your thesis is missing or confusing

## **BODY PARAGRAPHS: Examples**

- 10 Good specific examples used.  
5 Examples are decent but could be more specific.  
3 Your examples are very vague.

## **BODY PARAGRAPHS: Main Idea/Con**

- 5 I can identify your main ideas and Con statements in all 3 paragraphs.  
3 Your main ideas and/or your Con statements aren't entirely clear to me.  
1 One or more of your main idea/ Con statements is missing or confusing.

## **BODY PARAGRAPHS: Transitions**

- 5 I can identify your transitions between examples and they are good.  
3 Some of your transitions seem typical and boring.  
1 You need to have clear transitions between examples.

## **CONCLUSION PARAGRAPH**

- 5 You include all of the parts of a good conclusion: packs a punch!  
3 Your conclusion is decent and includes everything needed.  
1 Your conclusion is missing one or more elements.

## **SENTENCES**

- 5 I can find at least 1 semicolon rule and two different comma rules used correctly.  
3 Some use of commas but I can't find use of semicolons.  
1 You should use semicolon and comma rules to vary sentences.

TOTAL POINTS: \_\_\_\_\_/40

Please write a note to the writer about his/her essay to justify the grade you gave him/her.

# Some Writing Ideas

Most of the statements listed below are questions. Questions seem to work better for inspiring ideas than do one-word suggestions. Sometimes you'll get an idea for an essay with your answer to a question; sometimes the question will just suggest a topic to you.

Read the list over, and, when you find one that seems interesting, think about how to use it for your essay. Some of them will seem more or less helpful for a particular type of essay, but with some imagination you can find a way to use any of them in any given assignment. Some of them will seem too silly, too outrageous, too dumb to use. You may skip those; but leave them there to make your teacher nervous.

1. Are you for or against gun control? Support your response.
2. Are some of the things taught to you in school useless? What are they?
3. Can you swim?
4. Compare two people in your class.
5. Convince us to see a movie you have liked.
6. Convince the teacher that you deserve a good grade.
7. Describe a time you felt like a failure/success.
8. Describe some educational experience you have had outside of school.
9. Describe an embarrassing moment.
10. Describe "narrow mindedness"
11. Describe how you would change one day in your life.
12. Describe something unusual that you have done.
13. Do you have any pets? What's different about them?
14. Do you approve of the theory of evolution? Why/why not?
15. Do you have a pet; what silly thing does it do?
16. Do you feel we owe anything to animals? Are they more or less or equal to us in importance?
17. Do you ever want children? How many? Gender?
18. Do you think there is one single religion that is correct? Which?
19. Do you have brothers and sisters? Do you like them?
20. Does the vegetarian movement benefit the world?
21. Does capital punishment help society?
22. For whom would you vote in the next presidential election?
23. Have you ever/do you ever intend to be a member of the armed forces?
24. Have you ever fallen in love in a library?
25. How has this class met your expectations so far?
26. How do you think prison/jail systems need to be improved?
27. How do you feel when someone tells you his problems?
28. How hard was the last essay assignment?
29. How do you feel about the theory of evolution?
30. How do you feel about war? The draft?
31. How are you going to raise your kids differently?
32. How do you relate your morals to the issue of abortion?
33. How do you feel about women in politics?
34. How do you use research in real life?
35. How do you feel about the grading system in American schools?
36. If you are a conservative Republican say something you would like liberal Democrats to understand; if a liberal Democrat, something you would like conservative Republicans to understand.
37. If you could write one thing for the world to read what would it be?
38. If you were to pick a fruit or vegetable that best describes yourself, what would it be and why?
39. If you could have any animal for a pet, what would it be?
40. If you are a male, what do you wish females would understand; if a female, something you wish males would understand?
41. If you could travel anywhere, where would you go?
42. If you could go back in time to stop a violent crime would you? Describe the crime.
43. Is there really a god?
44. Name something you would like to learn about. REALLY!
45. Name something that is never taught in school but should be.

46. Respond to this idea: the usual reason we dislike someone is because that person somehow reminds us of ourselves.
47. Say something about the last essay you wrote.
48. Say something you think is absolutely true in all cases.
49. Should we have free public education through college? Graduate school?
50. Should the USA close its borders with Mexico and /or Canada?
51. Should guns be banned in our society?
52. Should the government legalize marijuana? Any other currently illegal drugs?
53. Should the government cut or raise taxes?
54. Should a girl change her name when she marries?
55. Should parents be punished for what their children do?
56. Should people judge other people on clothes, hair style, etc.
57. Should teachers receive merit raises?
58. Should women be drafted for combat duty?
59. Tell us something about yourself you've never told any of us before.
60. Tell us a story about something from your life that you feel supports some belief you have.
61. Tell us a story.
62. What should we do about the ozone layer? Rain forest?
63. What was the most dangerous thing you have ever done?
64. What is the most important issues that politicians need to deal with?
65. What do you look for in a mate?
66. What type of music do you like?
67. What is your favorite kind of pet?
68. What is your favorite sport?
69. What is the most important factor in a relationship?
70. What place does cheating have in school?
71. What rank are you in your family? (First born? Second? etc) How does it matter?
72. What is the best movie you have ever seen?
73. What do you need to be happy?
74. What is one of your prejudices?
75. What is your worst fear?
76. What is one thing you would change about your school if you were in charge?
77. What law(s) need changing?
78. What is your favorite material possession?
79. What would be your ultimate job?
80. What is "freedom?"
81. What, if anything, should society do about the homeless?
82. What is the fastest car on the street?
83. What really ticks you off?
84. What problems should the government solve first?
85. What types of people are in your school?
86. What was your most frightening experience?
87. What was your most memorable experience?
88. What has been your proudest moment?
89. What do you think of the death penalty?
90. What's the nicest thing you ever did for your girl/boy friend?
91. What's your favorite magazine?
92. What's a good New Year's resolution for your teacher?
93. When do you think we will have an African American president? A woman president?
94. Where would you like to travel? Why?
95. Which are better, foreign or domestic cars?
96. Who is your favorite book author and why?
97. Who has been the most influential person in your life?
98. Who is the best writer to read in preparing for a higher English class?
99. Who was the most "unique" person you have met?
100. Why do women/men cause men/women so many problems? What problems?
101. Why/when would you fight/not fight for your country?
102. Why are you going to the school you attend?
103. Why/why not do you believe in life after death?
104. Would you rather be a parent of a boy or girl/why?

# MEL-Con Paragraph Template

## A Graphic Organizer to Help You Write the Best Paragraphs

**M = Main Idea** (topic sentence)

**L = Links** (your explanation of how the example links to or supports your main idea).

**E = Evidence / Example** (facts)

**Con = Concluding Statement** (recap / summary)

		<b>M</b> Topic Sentence
	Transition to 1 <sup>st</sup> example	<b>E</b> Example Evidence
		<b>L</b> Link to topic (explain)
	Transition to 2 <sup>nd</sup> example	<b>E</b> Example Evidence
		<b>L</b> Link to topic (explain)
	Transition to 3 <sup>rd</sup> example	<b>E</b> Example Evidence
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## ***Closing STAC: Conclusion Method***

**Thesis Restatement starting with a Summary of your reasons.**


**Attention Getter-Loop: Connect back to your intro's attention-getter.**


**Clincher:**
