Essay Bootcamp/Makeover

*This is a guide to writing a short, concise, powerful, well-structured, no crap, muscular, unflowery high school essay. Have a partner vet your essay with you, to give a fresh pair of eyes to beefing up your essay according to the following steps. Go through and fix it up together. Your partner will be consulted as to the shape your essay is in by the time I get it:*

1. Write a typical high school essay on an inconsequential, mundane, apolitical topic. One that will allow you to them retool it with this sheet, and later write a sister essay arguing exactly the opposite view.
2. Then make sure the essay follows all Format #2 instructions, of which there are 10:
   * **Information section** at top is complete and in Times New Roman Size 12, including auto page numbering in the header,
   * All **Title** expectations met,
   * **Times New Roman size** **12** for absolutely everything in the essay,
   * **Double-spacing** (not multiple spacing). *No manual (Enter press) double-spacing,*
   * Left **justification** consistentlythroughout,
   * **More than five** paragraphs. If there are only three supporting points/paragraphs, add at least one more in the middle, and ensure there is a “responding to other, conflicting views” one,
   * All expectations regarding **capitals** and **punctuation**, especially of people and works mentioned in the essay, are met,
   * **Indented** paragraph expectations met,
   * There are bracketed, in-text references to works cited, as to what you quote directly. (every paragraph is going to have a quotation)
   * No **extra blank spaces** after paragraphs (proper Paragraph settings enabled).
3. The first word of your essay will be the first name (or honorific) of someone you will be quoting. Because the first sentence of the essay will be an on-topic **quotation** from someone important. And you may not simply start the essay with a quotation mark, followed by the quotation. You must start your essay with the name of the person quoted, tacking the quote onto the end of that sentence:

e.g.: Albert Einstein, speaking at the World’s Fair in 1953, said “Man is not ready for atomic power.”

1. Go through the essay and remove any and all uses of **first-person pronouns** (e.g. NO use of I, me, my, myself, us, we, our) and **second-person pronouns** (e.g. NO use of you, your, yourself.) The only exception to this rule is if you are quoting someone else.
2. Go through the essay and remove all use of **contractions** (e.g. can’t, won’t, didn’t and so on instead of cannot, will not, did not) and all use of etc.
3. Go through and remove all instances of **“firstly,” “secondly,” “thirdly,” “finally” and “in conclusion.” (**Also **“To conclude”** or any form of that word.)
4. Go through and remove all uses of the word “**portrays**.”
5. Go through and remove all uses of the word “**humans**.”
6. Go through and remove all forms of the word “**proves**.”
7. Go through and **remove all questions**, especially rhetorical ones, which aren’t part of quotations. Use statements only. Anything that’s not part of a quote, that ends in a question mark (or should have one) needs to be reworked to be a clear statement, as opposed to a rhetorical question.
8. Go through and remove “**weakening**” words like “seems,” “might,” “it is possible,” “perhaps,” “maybe,” “possibly” and “a sense of.”
9. Go through and add a number of “**strengthening**” terms like “clearly,” “dangerous,” “obviously,” “Without question,” “masterful,” “undeniable,” “horrendous,” “terrible,” “fatal,” “ridiculous,” “irresponsible,” “powerful,” “incredible,” and so on. Every single paragraph needs to have three “strengthening” terms. Turn your tone up *loud*. Write with power and conviction rather than prettiness.
10. Ensure that the introductory paragraph clearly states what the topic **issue** that will be explored is, in the second sentence. Don’t reveal which way your opinion is going to go yet, though. Don’t full-on claim your claim. Word it as something that will be decided at the end of the essay.
11. Ensure that the introductory paragraph then lays out exactly what the (minimum) **four reasons** will be. They need to be left “open-ended” so you have something to explain about them later on. So no going into them yet, and no revealing their use in taking the position you’re going to be taking. Just introduce them. So, if you’re going to argue that atomic power isn’t properly regulated, has a negative impact on the environment, does not provide sufficient benefit to the economy, and that it does have serious health issues, be careful to word it like your mind’s not made up yet:

e.g. To establish a position on this issue it is important to have a serious look at regulation, the degree of impact on the environment, possible benefits to the economy and potential health issues.

You really should be able to do this all in the one sentence. So do that. Like I just did.

1. **Remove any further sentences** from the introductory paragraph. If you’ve done what’s on this sheet, then you’re done with that paragraph. No more words allowed.
2. Check each of the body paragraphs. The first sentence of each must **introduce** what the reason/bit of evidence to be looked at in that particular paragraph will be, without fully getting into it, nor stating what your opinion will be:

e.g. Perhaps even more important to consider, as to atomic power, is whether the government is regulating it correctly.

(later you will argue that the government *is* or *isn’t* regulating it correctly. For the first sentence of the paragraph though, word it like it’s still an open discussion. Pretend it is.)

1. Every single body paragraph must contain at least one **specific**. No paragraph can be 100% out of your head. So each needs specific stuff that **didn’t** come from your head. Specific stuff one could, for example, go and look up to check your accuracy. Using bracketed in-text citation you included for that purpose. Each paragraph needs a quote from an expert (in which case use citation to provide the source), a statistic, or specific details such as people’s names, place names and/or dates.
2. Ensure that the **Responding to Conflicting Claims** paragraph is here, second-last, and that it gives “the other side” a nod of acknowledgment, but ultimately dismisses their side of things. Ensure that the concluding sentence is also you r**evealing your final decision** as to the topic addressed in this essay. Your real conclusion will happen in this last sentence of the second-last paragraph.
3. Your final paragraph is about **building on, moving ahead past** this conclusion. So your essay has decided one of the two things is better, or whatever. It’s time to stop trying to provide more evidence. You’re done. You have concluded. Now, given that, so what? What else can you say, now that you’ve given a position supported by evidence?The one kind of soap is better, so……? **(**Your final sentence of your essay will start with the first name of the last person you will be quoting. Your essay will end with the closing quotation mark on the concluding quote. *Obviously you will have to find a second on-topic quotation to end the essay with, rather than simply quoting the one from the start of your essay all over again.*
4. After the essay proper, you will include a separate page in the same Microsoft Word file. It will be titled Works Cited, and will use [www.citationmachine.net](http://www.citationmachine.net) or similar to create full bibliographic information for each work you used, in MLA format (because this is an English course. APA is more common for other courses.) List your sources in alphabetical order, rather than the order in which you used them.

**Topic : Then A Bit More About the Topic, Opinion not Revealed**

**Person’s Name** said “**Quote**” to begin the **Introductory Paragraph**. Parenthetical citation of direct quotes provides a one or two-word “pointing toward” which work from the Works Cited Page this is. (Fitzgerald p35) **Claim is then hinted at, worded as topic for discussion, rather than a final opinion. Final opinion is not revealed**. A careful look at **Reason #**1, **Reason #2, Reason #3, Reason #4,** and **Reason #5** are all promised in one sentence, as important considerations in making a decision **as to the claim** by the end. *No details about the* ***Reasons*** *are provided. No facts.*

**Reason #1 Introductory Sentence** says Reason #1 is important to consider **as to** **the claim**. Reason #1 is considered. Facts. Stats. A quote? Parenthetical citation of direct quotes provides a one or two-word “pointing toward” which work from the Works Cited Page this is. (Fitzgerald p35) Personal pronouns, contractions and all manner of vague, general, weakly worded sentences are carefully avoided, and confident, factual language is used. **Reason #1 Concluding Sentence** clearly states which side **Reason #1** gives evidence for **as to** **the claim.**

**Reason #2 Introductory Sentence** says Reason #2 is important to consider **as to** **the claim**. Reason #2 is considered. Facts. Stats. A quote? Parenthetical citation of direct quotes provides a one or two-word “pointing toward” which work from the Works Cited Page this is. (Fitzgerald p35) Personal pronouns, contractions and all manner of vague, general, weakly worded sentences are carefully avoided, and confident, factual language is used. **Reason #2 Concluding Sentence** clearly states which side **Reason #2** gives evidence for **as to** **the claim.**

**Reason #3 Introductory Sentence** says Reason #3 is important to consider **as to** **the claim**. Reason #3 is considered. Facts. Stats. A quote? Parenthetical citation of direct quotes provides a one or two-word “pointing toward” which work from the Works Cited Page this is. (Fitzgerald p35) Personal pronouns, contractions and all manner of vague, general, weakly worded sentences are carefully avoided, and confident, factual language is used. **Reason #3 Concluding Sentence** clearly states which side **Reason #3** gives evidence for **as to** **the claim.**

**Reason #4 Introductory Sentence** says Reason #4 is important to consider **as to** **the claim**. Reason #4 is considered. Facts. Stats. A quote? Parenthetical citation of direct quotes provides a one or two-word “pointing toward” which work from the Works Cited Page this is. (Fitzgerald p35) Personal pronouns, contractions and all manner of vague, general, weakly worded sentences are carefully avoided, and confident, factual language is used. **Reason #4 Concluding Sentence** clearly states which side **Reason #4** gives evidence for **as to** **the claim.**

**Reason #5 Introductory Sentence** says Reason #5 is important to consider **as to** **the claim**. Reason #5 is considered. Facts. Stats. A quote? Parenthetical citation of direct quotes provides a one or two-word “pointing toward” which work from the Works Cited Page this is. (Fitzgerald p35) Personal pronouns, contractions and all manner of vague, general, weakly worded sentences are carefully avoided, and confident, factual language is used. **Reason #5 Concluding Sentence** clearly states which side **Reason #5** gives evidence for **as to** **the claim.**

**Responding to Other Conflicting Views** paragraph responds to a minimum of two of the weakest points in your argument, or a minimum of two things you didn’t really take into account, and admits them. A weak attempt to dismiss them as unimportant or invalid, (or an admission that they are true, but insufficient to change your mind) happens here. Fight to give this conflicting view a voice, but don’t fight too hard. Quoting “the other side” is very fair of you. **Concluding Sentence** clearly states that Conflicting Views Do not change the facts **as to** **the claim.** Readers are reminded that a careful look was taken at **Reason #5**, **Reason #4, Reason #3, Reason #2,** and **Reason #1,** as important considerations in making a decision **as to** **the claim**. **Claim is now presented, worded as a final opinion/judgment as to the winner.**  **Conclusion!**

**Final paragraph** says, given what you have concluded….. so what now? You need to give closing thoughts, building on the conclusion you’ve made. *No more arguing it.* **Other** **Person’s Name** said “Final quote” to end the **Concluding Paragraph**. Parenthetical citation of direct quotes provides a one or two-word “pointing toward” which work from the Works Cited Page this is. (Fitzgerald p35)

Hit “**Insert>Page Break**” and do a **Works Cited Page**, on the new page, with “**Works Cited**” at the top of the page.