

Upper School English Checklist for Essay

Introduction

- Progresses from general to specific
 - Even general ideas relate to the present argument
- Establishes exigence (“so what?”)
- Establishes your ethos/credibility/authority as a writer
- Makes a mapping gesture (“gesture of partition”)
- Contains thesis
 - concise
 - impersonal
 - arguable (not opinion or taste, but arguable by logic; someone might disagree)
 - exigent

Body Paragraph

- Begins (for now) with a topic sentence
 - serves as a mini-thesis for the paragraph
 - refers to the main argument
 - analyzes (rather than summarizes) material
 - emphasizes “how” rather than “what”
- Contains evidence
 - situates evidence in a logical, coherent framework
 - uses transitional expressions (and/or)
 - repeats local key words (and/or)
 - repeats words key to topic/thesis
 - quotes text
 - uses short, frequent quotations
 - uses passages that support main argument
 - blends passages into text
 - using signal phrases
 - using appropriate punctuation
 - citing using correct MLA style
 - punctuation
 - formulation

Arrangement

- Body paragraphs balance each other
 - in weight, development
 - in importance
- Arrangement of body paragraphs features logic
 - chronological in the story?
 - rhetorical?

Conclusion

- Redefines the thesis, rather than restating it
 - in light of the whole of the essay
- Provides some insights that lead gently to a next step
- Progresses from specific to general