

Essay

- A coherent piece of writing that gives your thoughts about, and educated analysis of, a subject

Jane Schaffer Formulaic Writing Method

- A method for teaching basic essay writing
- A method of writing essays that addresses the basic requirements of most essays required for school

One-Paragraph Jane Schaffer-style

1. Topic sentence

2. Concrete Detail

3. Commentary

Chunk

4. Commentary

5. Concrete Detail

6. Commentary

Chunk

7. Commentary

8. Concluding Sentence

One-Paragraph Jane Schaffer-style

Topic sentence (EDUCATED OPINION)

Main Idea

Mildly controversial

Something you have to prove

Las Vegas is one of the most surreal cities in the world.

(T) TOPIC SENTENCE

One-Paragraph Jane Schaffer-style

Concrete Detail (FACT)

Support for your topic sentence

Fact

Can't be argued with

For instance, the center of the city is full of different kinds of buildings including a two-thirds scale Eiffel Tower, a giant black glass pyramid, a scaled-down replica of the New York skyline, and a faux Medieval castle.

(T) TOPIC SENTENCE

(CD) CONCRETE DETAIL

One-Paragraph Jane Schaffer-style

Commentary

Your explanation of the concrete detail

Your personal insight

Your analysis

The whole place reminds me of a big amusement park like Disneyland with its different “lands.”

It’s as if each building was constructed in isolation without any consideration of the other buildings.

(T) TOPIC SENTENCE

(CD) CONCRETE DETAIL

(CM) COMMENTARY

(CM) COMMENTARY

One-Paragraph Jane Schaffer-style

Concluding Sentence

Wraps up the paragraph
Rephrases the main idea

Las Vegas is such a strange city, it is hard to believe it actually exists unless you actually go there and experience it for yourself.

(T) TOPIC SENTENCE

(CD) CONCRETE DETAIL

(CM) COMMENTARY

(CM) COMMENTARY

(CS) CONCLUDING SENTENCE

One-Paragraph Essay Jane Schaffer-style

timer

How many “Chunks” are there in this paragraph?

(T) Las Vegas is the most surreal city anywhere in the world.

(CD) For instance, the center of the city is full of different kinds of buildings including a two-thirds scale Eiffel Tower, a giant black glass pyramid, a scaled-down replica of the New York skyline, and a faux Medieval castle.

(CM) The whole place reminds me of a big amusement park like Disneyland with its different “lands.”

(CM) It’s as if each building was constructed in isolation without any consideration of the other buildings.

(CD) In addition, this center is surrounded by a sprawl of suburbs housing close to two million people and stretching out into the desert.

(CM) I always wonder what made so many people want to live in such an inhospitable place.

(CM) All those people and houses almost seem as if they traveled across the wasteland and gathered to pay homage to the weird buildings in the center.

(CS) Las Vegas is such a strange city, it is hard to believe it actually exists unless you actually go there and experience it for yourself.

While we read this together, annotate your copy to identify:

- Topic sentences (find 4)
- Concrete Details (find 4)
- Commentary (find 4)
- Concluding sentences (find 2)

This skilled writer is not using the Jane Schaffer format, so look for the *characteristics* of each item.

This exercise is worth 28 points (2 points per correctly identified element)

The Ghosts We Think We See

BRUCE HOOD USUALLY CONDUCTS EXPERIMENTS UNDER MUCH MORE rigorous conditions than this, but since he had a large audience one recent evening in London, the University of Bristol psychology professor figured he'd seize the opportunity. Holding up an old cardigan, he asked if anyone would be willing to wear it if he paid them £20 (about \$40). Every hand shot up. Then Hood added that the sweater had been worn by a notorious murderer. All but a



couple of hands disappeared. "People view evil as something physical, even tangible, and able to infect the sweater" as easily as lice, Hood says. That idea helps explain a number of supernatural beliefs, he argues: "The idea of spirits and souls appearing in this world becomes more plausible if we believe in general that the nonphysical can transfer over to the physical world."

And believe it we do. A Gallup poll found that only 7 percent of Americans do *not* believe in telepathy, déjà vu, ghosts, past lives or other supernatural phenomena, which may have more than a little to do with the soaring popularity of Halloween. Even eminent rationalists such as Alfred Russel Wallace, who discovered natural selection (prompting Darwin to speed up his own work), believed in ghosts, haunted houses, levitation and clairvoyance. But "supernatural"—anything that cannot be explained by laws of physics or biology—also encompasses more mundane phenomena. It includes the belief that you can feel someone staring at you from behind, and that if you think about someone he is more likely to phone you (this doesn't work for getting first dates to call you for a second, however). Far from being pathological, the ubiquity of such beliefs is actually a clue to how the normal mind works, cognitive scientists now realize, for belief in the supernatural arises from the same mental processes that underlie everyday reasoning and perception.

Chief among those normal processes is our neurons' habit of filling in the blanks. The brain takes messy, incomplete input and turns it into a meaningful, complete picture. Visualize four Pac-Man-like black shapes arranged so that the wedge removed from each seems to form a corner of a white square. Neurons in the brain's visual regions, whose job is to fire when the eyes see a square's edges, do fire—even though there are no edges to see. The mind also sees patterns in random data, which is why the sky is speckled with bears and big dippers. This drive to perceive patterns—which is very useful in interpreting experimental data as well as understanding people's behavior—can also underlie such supernatural beliefs as seeing Jesus in the scorch marks and flecks of grain on a grilled-cheese sandwich. "If a stain looks like the Virgin Mary," says Hood, "then it is a divine sign and not a coincidence. If the wind in the cave sounds like a voice, then it is a voice."

Patterns can be in time as well as space. Hence such superstitious rituals as wearing the same shirt when you compete in a sports event, or not standing on the white lines of a tennis court,

as John McEnroe refused to do. If you depart from the ritual to prove to a skeptic that it really works, you become so tense about the loss of the magic talisman that you're indeed likely to lose. Game, set and match for superstition.

The mind also tends to impute consciousness to inanimate objects (ever yell at a balky computer?). This leads us to believe that natural phenomena are "purposeful, caused by agents with sentient minds," says Hood, whose book "The Supernatural Sense" is due next year. It's only a short step to thinking that "things that go bump in the night" are the result of some spirit or "agent," not branches brushing against your drainpipe.

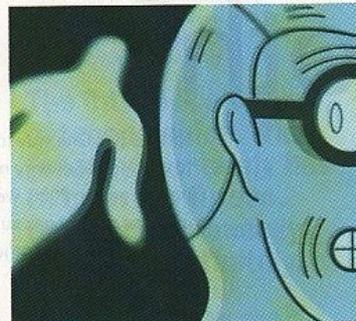
The belief that minds are not bound to bodies reflects a dualism that shows up in children as young as 2. "This is universal, seeing minds as separate from bodies," says psychologist Paul Bloom of Yale University. "Kids have no trouble believing stories in which people exchange bodies, for instance. And since supernatural beings like ghosts are without material bodies but with minds, our belief in dualism makes them totally plausible."

And the belief that you can feel someone staring at you from behind? Someone who sees you suddenly pivot is likely to return your stare, leading to the false conclusion that you did detect the gaze. Thanks to "confirmatory bias," people tend to remember every time a hunch like this—or like the idea that the phone rings after you think about someone—is borne out. We forget all those times it isn't.

As scientists probe deeper into the brain for what underlies superstition, they have found a surprising suspect: dopamine, which usually fuels the

Normal brain functions, such as seeing patterns, make us more likely to believe in the supernatural.

brain's sense of reward. In one study, two groups of people, either believers in the supernatural or skeptics, looked at quickly displayed images of faces and scrambled faces, real words and non-words. The goal was to pick out the real ones. Skeptics called more real faces nonfaces, and real words nonwords, than did believers, who happily saw faces and words even in gibberish. But after the skeptics were given L-dopa, a drug that increases dopamine, their skeptical threshold fell, and they ID'd more faces and words as real. That suggests that dopamine inclines the brain to see patterns even in random noise. Boo!



**Label each of these sentences and REWRITE them in order according to the timer
Jane Schaffer 8-sentence paragraph format (10 minutes)**

1. In addition, my mother also believed that I should hang my shirts in the closet so the fronts faced left and hanging them any other way was morally wrong.
2. I now have a tendency to question the validity of almost any rule I am required to follow.
3. Her beatings for what was not my fault helped me understand that people in authority are not perfect.
4. How I react to authority today is partly a result of learning to cope with my mother's volatile and irrational behavior.
5. When I entered the Air Force, we were required to hang our shirts the opposite way and this showed me that rules were often arbitrary.
6. My mother would call to me from the backyard while I was too far away in the front yard to hear her and then beat me for not responding.
7. These early experiences, coupled with an adult perspective, have helped me recognize people who enjoy power for power's sake and those who are genuinely trying to create an orderly environment for the betterment of all.
8. These irrational beatings made me question most authority figures.

Literary Response

What is the difference between reading a story, thinking about a story, and responding to a story?

Once upon a time there were three little pigs and the time came for them to leave home and seek their fortunes. Before they left, their mother told them " Whatever you do , do it the best that you can because that's the way to get along in the world, and watch out for the wolf. He will surely eat you if he can catch you.

The first little pig built his house out of straw because it was the easiest thing to do. The second little pig built his house out of sticks. This was a little bit stronger than a straw house. The third little pig built his house out of bricks.

Sure enough, one night the big bad wolf, who dearly loved to eat fat little piggies, came along and saw the first little pig in his house of straw. He said "Let me in, Let me in, little pig or I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house in!" "Not by the hair of my chinny chin chin", said the little pig. But of course the wolf did blow the house in and the first little pig barely escaped to his brother's stick house.

The wolf then came to the house of sticks. "Let me in ,Let me in little pig or I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house in!" "Not by the hair of our chinny chin chins", said the two little pigs. But the wolf blew that house in too, and, just in time, the first and second little pigs escaped to the last little pig's house.

The wolf then came to the house of bricks." Let me in , let me in" cried the wolf"Or I'll huff and I'll puff till I blow your house in!" "Not by the hair of our chinny chin chins" said the pigs. Well, the wolf huffed and puffed but he could not blow down that brick house.

Well, the wolf was a sly old wolf and he climbed up on the roof to look for a way into the brick house.

The little pig saw the wolf climb up on the roof and lit a roaring fire in the fireplace and placed on it a large kettle of water. When the wolf finally found the hole in the chimney he crawled down and KERSPLASH right into that kettle of water and that was the end of the pigs' troubles with the big bad wolf.

Literary Response

What is the difference between reading a story, thinking about a story, and responding to a story?

Why do so many of us know the story of the Three Little Pigs?

Why do so many children like to hear it over and over again?

Why are we reading such a simple story in a high school classroom?

What universal human truths are expressed in the story?

What human characteristics are reflected in the story's characters?

Literary Response

Haven't we seen this slide before?

What is the difference between reading a story, thinking about a story, and responding to a story?

Who are the characters in “The Three Little Pigs?”

What do we know about them? Why?

One-Paragraph Literary Response (Character)

In the fairy tale, “The Three Little Pigs,” The third pig is very wise. For example, he remembered his mother’s advice to always do the best job he could and to watch out for the wolf. *This demonstrates his willingness to consider other viewpoints. His respect for his mother’s advice also indicates his awareness that those with more experience can potentially help one avoid mistakes.* Furthermore, he acted on his mother’s advice by building a house made of brick. *This took far more effort than building a house of straw or sticks, as his brothers did. His dedication resulted in a much stronger house, frustrating the wolf and saving his brothers.* In conclusion, the third pig is wise enough to outsmart not only his brothers, but also the “big, bad” wolf.

Literary Response

Let's read a story

One person from each table get enough Literature texts for your table.

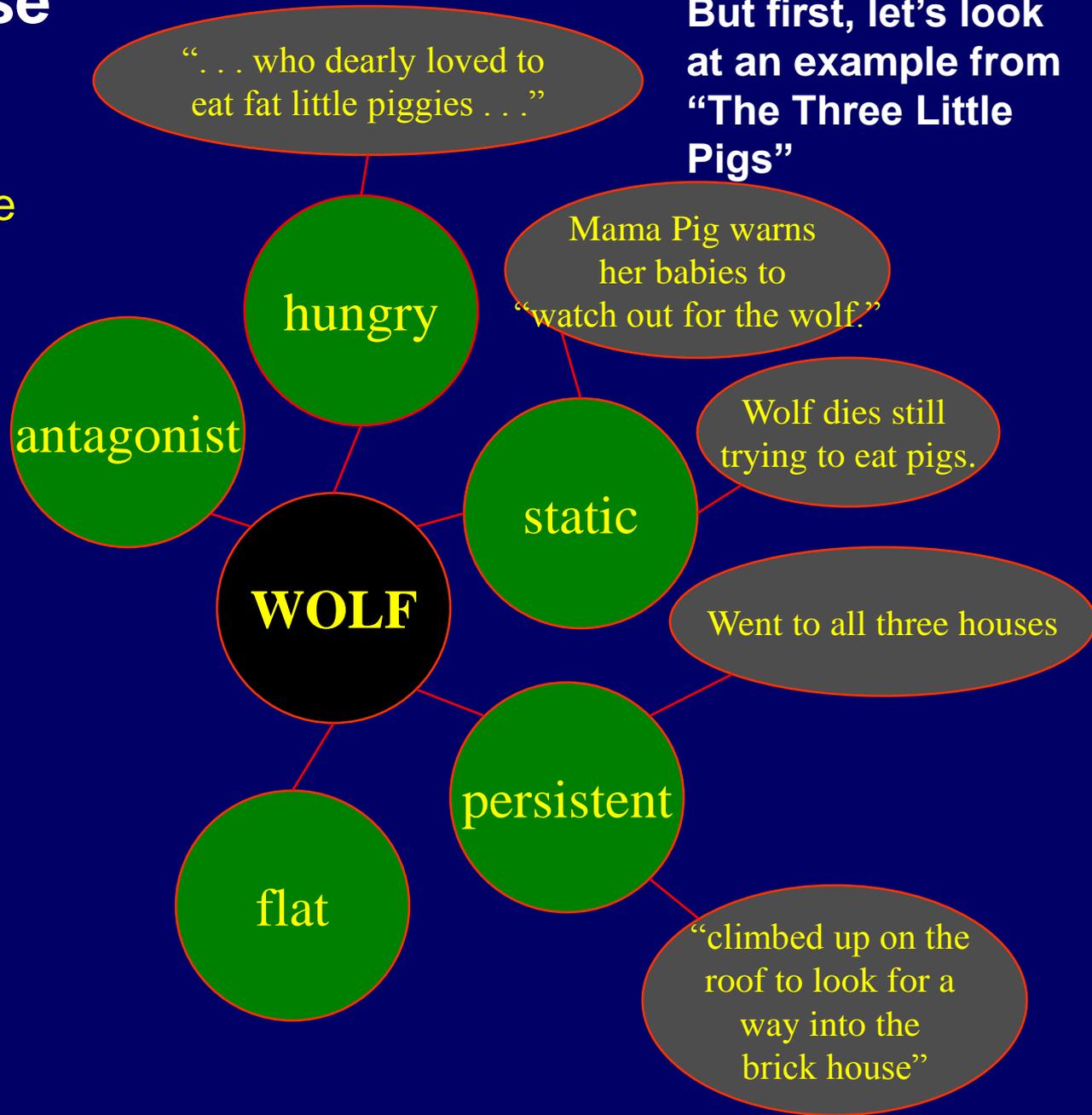
We're going to read and analyze a story by Bessie Head called "The Prisoner Who Wore Glasses."

Literary Response

Build a bubble map of one of the elements of "The Prisoner Who Wore Glasses."

Character
Setting
Conflict

But first, let's look at an example from "The Three Little Pigs"



Literary Response

Now, using what you learned from our discussion and our concept mapping exercise, you will write a single, eight-sentence, two-chunk, literary response paragraph to some aspect of “Brothers are the Same.” You may choose to write about the story’s conflict, theme, setting, or a character. (prewrite, peer edit, and draft first, then write your final on the worksheet)

Prewrite - use any technique you wish

Draft – write

Revise – take it to a colleague

Edit –take it to a colleague

Proofread – take it to a colleague

Publish – submit

Reflect – get your paper back and think

Literary Response Rubric

The first sentence is the topic sentence addresses an aspect of conflict, setting, or character.

(T)

The second sentence is a factual concrete detail that supports the topic sentence.

(CD)

The third and fourth sentences are commentary on the first sentence and show the writers critical analysis of the text.

(CM)

(CM)

The fifth sentence is an additional concrete detail that supports the topic sentence.

(CD)

The sixth and seventh sentences are commentary on the fifth sentence and show the writers critical analysis of the text.

(CM)

(CM)

The eighth sentence concludes the paragraph by rephrasing the topic sentence and does not add any new information.

(CS)

5 points per sentence for a total of 40 points.

Incomplete sentences count zero.