

English 233

Part 2: The Essay

The Paragraph

The Essay

Topic Sentence

Supporting Sentences and Details

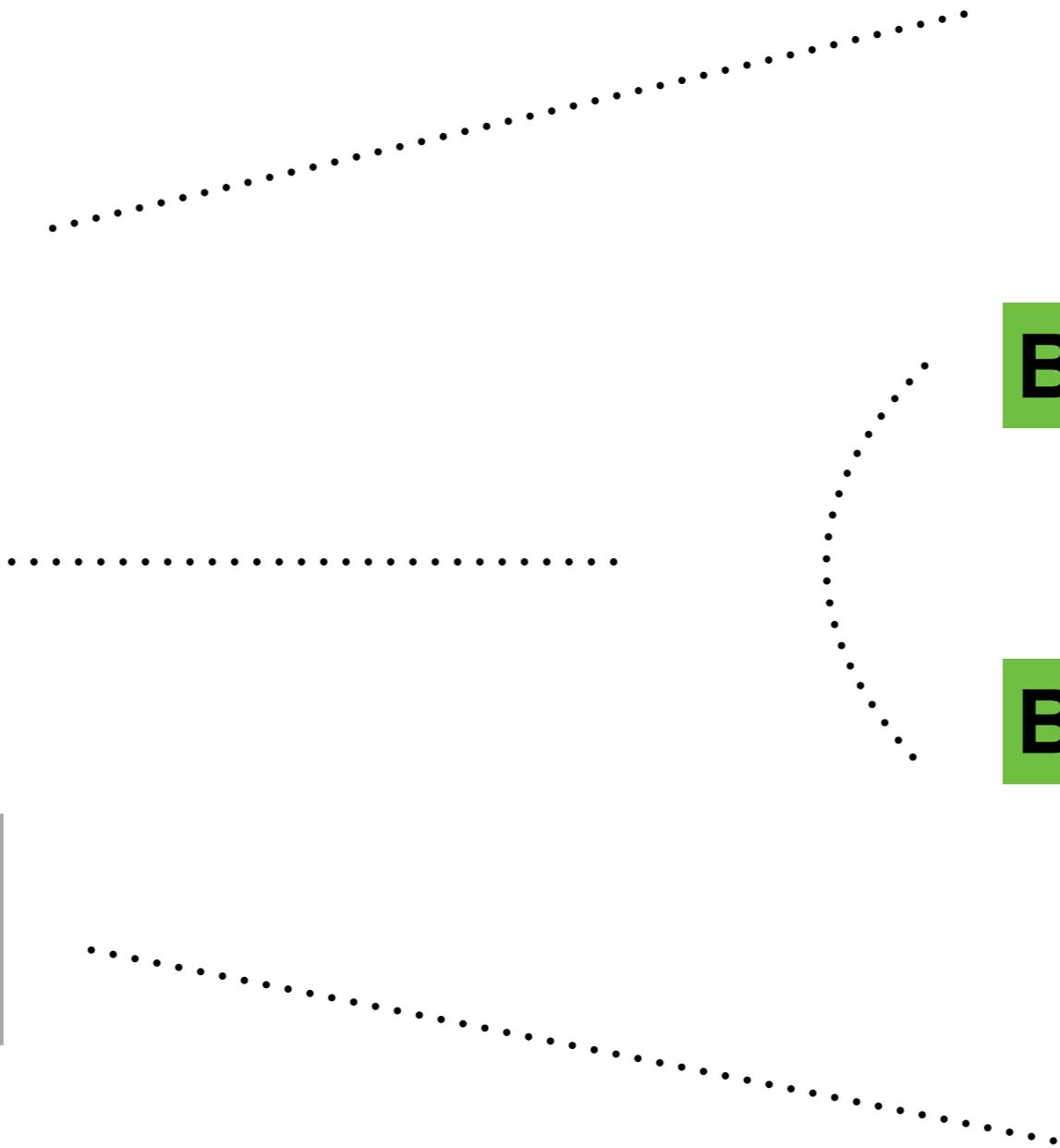
Concluding Sentence

Introduction

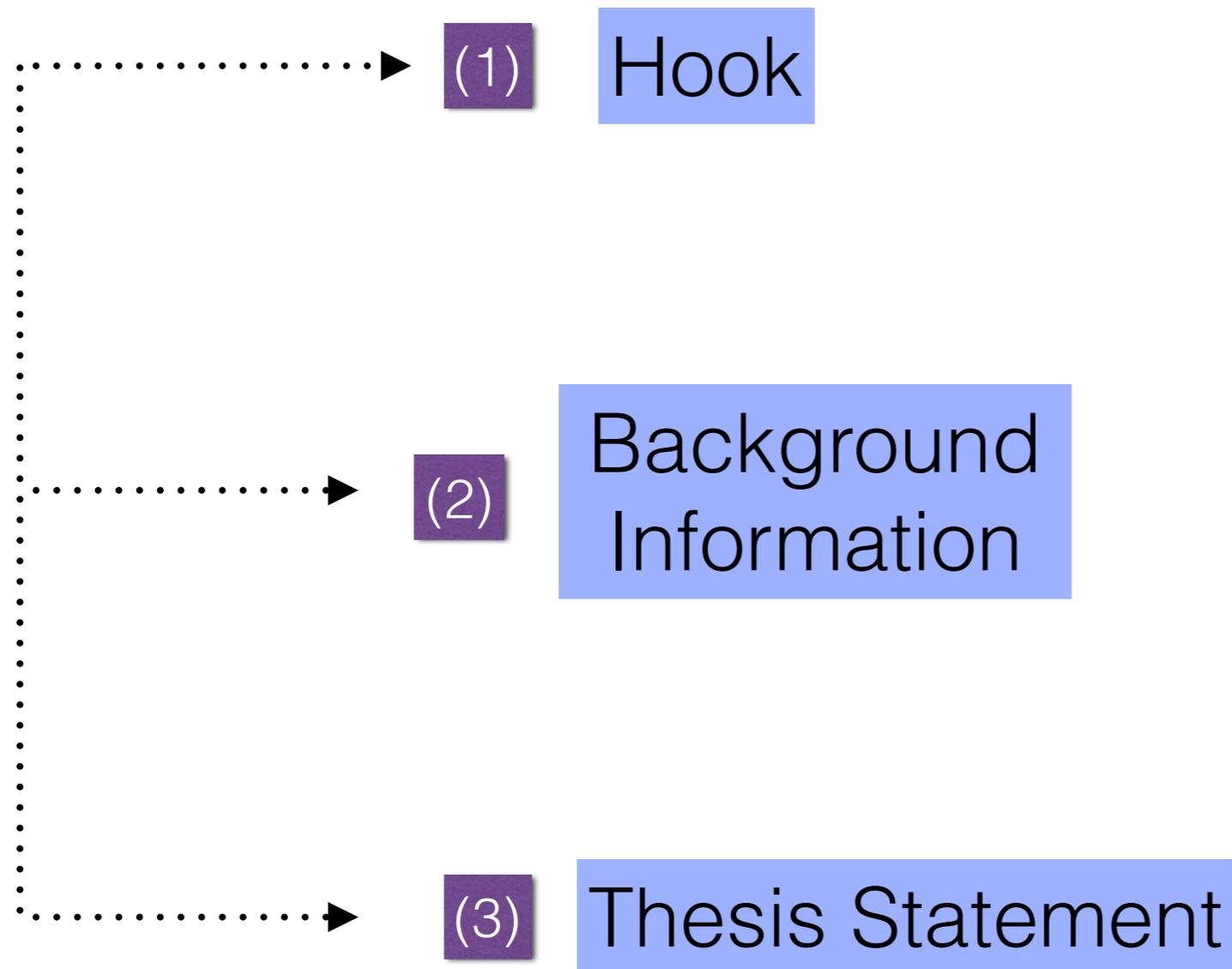
Body Paragraph

Body Paragraph

Conclusion



The Introduction



What is a Hook?

A hook is an opening statement (which is usually the first sentence) in an essay that attempts to grab the reader's attention so that they want to read on. It can be done by using a few different types of hooks, which are:

quote

a fact

anecdote

a question

statistic

Be mindful that the hook has to be related to the overall topic of the paper.

Background Information

Background information provides the reader with the essential context

Thesis Statement

- A thesis statement helps unify a paper.
- It should summarize the main point and guide the paper's development.
- A thesis statement can be expressed in a sentence or two.

- An academic essay always includes a thesis statement that introduces the **topic** of the essay and the idea or **point of view** that the writer has about the topic.
- A thesis statement is a topic plus a point of view.

- Writing Prompt: What are the main advantages or disadvantages of shopping online?

Topic

Point
of view

Online shopping is superior to shopping in stores **because it is** convenient, it offers consumers a wider range of products, and it saves money.

key words advantages and disadvantages help the writer decide on a point of view. Other key words in writing prompts that can help a writer develop a point of view might include ***discuss difference/similarities***, ***explain causes/effects***, or ***argue for/against***.

- Thesis statements often tell the reader **the specific points** that will be developed in the in the body paragraphs.
- Some thesis statements are more general and do no not state the points that will be developed in the body paragraphs, but it is clear to the reader what the points could be.

Writing Prompts: What are the benefits of shopping in large chain stores?

- **Stated points:** Shopping in large chain stores is superior to shopping in smaller local stores because *the choice of products is greater, product uniformity is more reliable, and prices are lower.*
- **More general:** Shopping in large chain stores offers many benefits.

Some things are **NOT** thesis statements:

- **A question:** What are the benefits of online shopping?
- **A topic that is too vague or broad:** The internet has changed us.
- **A simple statement of fact:** Many people shop online.
- **A statement that tells us what you will talk about:** I am going to discuss online shopping.

Points to Consider When Writing a Thesis Statement

1. Do not “telegraph” your thesis.

A good thesis does not need to state “This paper will show” or “I hope to show.” Your point should be apparent to readers.

2. How have you explained how? Why?

A good thesis statement often answers the questions how or why. Consider, for example, the following:

The lifestyle of a teenager in the 1960s was very different from the lifestyle of most modern American teenagers.

So what? Why should a reader continue? In what ways are the lifestyles of the youngsters different? Better versions of this statement might be:

Because of advances in technology, the lifestyle of modern American teenagers is very different from the lifestyle of teens in the 1960s. (This statement says why the difference exists)

Or . . .

A young person in the 1960s had fewer options concerning entertainment, education, and career opportunities than do young adults today. (The essay could go on to support what the "options" were.)

3. Use the thesis while writing.

A thesis serves a useful purpose: the writer can check the body of the paper against it, since it promises a reader what will follow. If the body contains other information, such as other major reasons for the differences cited, then the thesis might need to be revised.

4. Provide clear, specific support for the thesis statement .

Example:

High school graduates should be required to take two years off to serve in the military or pursue community service projects before entering college in order to increase their maturity and global awareness.

The paper that follows should present an argument and give evidence to support the claim that students should serve in the military or pursue community projects before entering college.

Some Hints for Writing a Thesis Statement

1. Try using a template sentence:

I am writing about _____, and I am going to argue, show, or prove _____.

What you wrote in the first blank is the topic; what you wrote in the second blank is what focuses your paper.

Example:

I am going to write about the American automobile industry, and I am going to show that it is actually invigorated by foreign competition.

2. Next, refine the sentence.

Example:

The American automobile industry has been invigorated by foreign competition, which has forced it to create more economical production techniques and produce better cars.

Note: In this example, the thesis statement suggests an obvious path for development in "economical production techniques" and "better cars." Two following paragraphs, for example, would logically discuss 1) production techniques and 2) better cars.

3. Then answer these questions concerning your thesis and paper:

What question is my assignment asking?

Am I answering that question and focusing on a small area of investigation?

As I read my paper, have I supported the thesis, or digressed? If so, where? How?