

Personal Response to Texts Essay Format English Language Arts

In a personal response to text essay the writer may choose to keep the format of the essay critical, in which the pieces of literature presented are analyzed. The writer will also relate their own experience as it relates to the material provided using emotional and sensory detail.

The important thing to remember is that this format of an essay, unlike the critical/analytical response, allows you to use personal pronouns (except the word ‘you’)

I. INTRODUCTION

- a. GENERAL STATEMENT to introduce the topic in the question.
- b. FOCUS into answering the question; you should also mention the literature and/or other materials and situations you will be referring to here. You may use a phrase such as: “In life, as in literature, people . . .” Follow this statement with the introduction of the materials you will be discussing in your essay. Do not talk about yourself or your experience yet because you want to build a bridge of common knowledge with your readers first.
- c. CONTROLLING IDEA/THESIS STATEMENT: This is where you answer the question being asked. You answer what is conveyed about people and set up what you will explain/support/prove in your body paragraphs. (You can have one point supported by all paragraphs, or one for each paragraph – the choice is yours: look at your examples and what they will support before writing your thesis.)

II. BODY PARAGRAPHS (please note that c and d are reversible; order does not matter, as long as both are present. Likewise, you may choose to have one paragraph deal with the text entirely and then your second paragraph would explain/develop your personal connection to the text) (Minimum 2 paragraphs)

- a. TOPIC SENTENCE: a general statement; the point from the thesis you will be addressing/supporting/proving in this paragraph.
- b. EXPLAIN more about the paragraph topic in your own words.
- c. PERSONAL ANECDOTE: Give an example from your own life, or from reality, that proves your topic sentence true; that is, the real example you give shows that people do the thing your topic sentence says they do. THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE IN YOUR PAPER THAT YOU MAY USE PERSONAL PRONOUNS: I, MY, ME, ETC.. OTHERWISE IT IS A FORMAL PAPER AND SHOULD BE WRITTEN AS SUCH.
- d. SPECIFIC EXAMPLE from the Texts: find an example you can explain and/or quote from the text or other materials you’ve been provided with, which supports the topic sentence and proves it true. State the situation from the piece of literature or describe the visual, what happens/how the situation is addressed, and what the outcome of the situation is to adequately prove your point.
- e. CLINCHER SENTENCE: Sum up your paragraph’s point/argument in a general sentence; restate your topic sentence more specifically.

III. CONCLUSION

- a. SUMMARIZE your main points; restate your thesis (look at your clincher sentences to help you).
- b. FINAL THOUGHTS: End with a thought provoking statement that will leave your reader thinking about and with an impression of your overall argument – this should be a strong statement that sums up your overall argument.