

Building a Thesis Paragraph

I. **CONTENTS:** A thesis paragraph generally includes the following:

- **Text Reference:** the title, author, and genre (TAG) of the text being analyzed.
- **Plot Summary:** a brief review of the most significant events or basic story.
- **Claim/Thesis Statement:** what you believe is a meaning of the novel. (This should be disputable. In other words, different people will have a different interpretation of the novel's meaning.)
- **Evidence:** how you will prove the claim and what content and types of examples you will use to provide it. For example, you will provide examples using one character's actions or you will provide examples using several characters' actions.

Tips for Strong Claims: There is no right answer. Strong claims should be debatable. But the thesis paragraph must include the parts listed above. Notice that the models are constructed quite differently, but they each include the necessary parts and state claims that can be disputed.

Order. Rules. Structure. These words describe the futuristic society found in Lois Lowry's novel *The Giver*.

(author) (genre) (title)

At first, the reader sees that the society runs smoothly. But, we soon learn that the people have little individuality or say in their own lives. Members of the society willingly accept the jobs, spouses, and even children that the Elders select for them. Adults take medication to suppress any emotions that might lead them to question their controlled existence. Jonas, the main character, has

(plot summary)

the unique role of receiving the memories of humanity. He suffers pain that the others do not, but, through a series of events,

(evidence)

also learns about the beauty and power of love. He illustrates that the power of love is worth the cost of pain and suffering.

(claim)

II. IDENTIFYING THE PARTS

Directions: Underline the parts of the thesis paragraph below. Write the name of each part underneath.

Lois Lowry, in her novel *The Giver*, proves that our memory allows us to experience true happiness. In this futuristic society, people no longer have the power of memory. Memory caused people to suffer pain as they recalled war, famine, poverty, and despair. So, the society manufactured a pain-free, memory-free world where people were civil and polite, but had no say about their wants and desires. The main character, Jonas, is different from the others in his society, as he is expected to receive the memories of the past. His mentor, The Giver, passes along human history to Jonas. While Jonas is shocked by the pain he experiences, he ultimately comes to believe that memory allows for happiness, a state of being worth striving for.

Body Paragraphs: Text Structure Models

Body paragraphs state the reasons you believe your claim is valid and provide evidence (examples) to support your thinking. Consider the following as you plan which evidence you will use and how you will structure the text to effectively support your argument.

I. Four Basic Text Structures

Extended Example-Which piece of evidence is a turning point or a key internal event for the character? This example will likely be your first body paragraph since it is probably the most important example to support your claim.

Summary-Which events in the plot connect to illustrate a key point that proves your claim? For example, the summary might show how the character changes or deals with conflict. You will need to find two or more related events that support your point. These examples give the reader the gist of the character(s), or the conflict(s).

Connected Examples- Which examples seem connected to one another and make a key point to prove the claim? You will need to find at least two examples that connect to one another.

Literary Device- Which example(s) includes a purposeful use of a literary device? The device may be found multiple times across the novel, or it might be found at a key turning point.