# ESL TUTORS' WORKSHOP #3

## THE ACADEMIC ESSAY:

- A. WHAT IS THE ACADEMIC ESSAY STRUCTURE?
- B. ARE THERE SOME STEPS TO FOLLOW IN THE PROCESS?
  - 1. Brainstorming and the outline
  - 2. The introduction paragraph (question/problem to solve and thesis statement)
  - 3. **Body** paragraphs
  - 4. Conclusion
- C. WHAT SHOULD I DO IF THE STUDENT HAS ALREADY COME TO SEE ME WITH AN **ESSAY THAT IS VERY CONFUSING, DISORGANISED**, LACKING A THESIS STATEMENT, ETC. (HOW CAN I BE EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT, HELP THE STUDENT UNDERSTAND HOW TO "FIX" IT THE BEST WAY?)
- D. **GARBALDY-GOOP** OR "LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE HIT THE TRANSLATE BUTTON"!!!

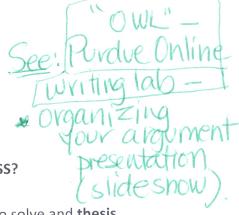
## A. ACADEMIC ESSAY STRUCTURE:

- Remember, many **countries don't have essays** at all in many schools (ex. Russia) or the structure, content, process, rules are completely **different** (China, Japan, etc.), so start with the bones of what it is made of:

INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH(S)
BODY PARAGRAPH(S)
CONCLUSION PARAGRAPH(S)

# -Questions to ask the student:

- What is a paragraph? (What does it look like/shape/indent/no spaces between sentences)
- What is the purpose/job of the introduction (includes...?)
- What is the purpose/job of the body(ies)? (includes...?)
- What is the purpose/job of the conclusion? (includes...?)



- What does double-spaced mean? (and should it be...?)
- What size font should be used? (and which style font?)
- How many paragraphs total should be written?
- How is the title written? (Size, centering, which words have capital letters?)

## **B. STEPS TO FOLLOW:**

1. **Brainstorming**: Do this before anything else/don't write your essay yet

QUESTION: **free-write or** brainstorm on a piece of paper **randomly** (mess)?

Free-write: PF

**PROS** 

Ideas flow in full sentences
Use a highlighter/main points
Can relax/no grammar, org., etc.

Random mess:

key words but faster no highlighter needed can relax (etc.)

**CONS** 

Harder to find main point visually

Takes longer to write and decipher

less detailed get "stuck" for ideas

## 2. OUTLINE

- -What are the **different styles**? (circles, triangles, squares, lines ,etc.?) see example
- -Are there any **advantages or disadvantages** to one style over another?
- -How do you **organize** your free-write or random mess brainstorm into the **outline**? See example
- -What do the different **circles/sections represent** in an essay? See example

- -Why is the **outline helpful**/necessary? (what do **you avoid**?/what does it help you see/**create?**)
- -Can I modify my outline as I start to write my essay?

## 3. THE INTRODUCTION:

- -How many sentences should it have?
- -How should I begin? (how does the outline help me?)
- -What is the **thesis statement**? (how does the outline help me find it?)
- -Where should I put the thesis statement in the introduction?

### 4. BODY PARAGRAPHS:

- -**How many** body paragraphs should I write? (how does the outline help me know this?)
- -How do I know **when to switch** to another body paragraph? (how does the outline help?)
- -What should the **first sentence** do? (how does the outline help me know this?)
- -What do the **other sentences say in the body**? (how does the outline help me know this?)
- -How many sentences should I have in the body? (how does the outline help me with this?)
- -How does the **outline help me avoid repeating** my ideas again and again in the body? (very common mistake)
- -Can I add more body paragraphs than my outline shows? (what should I be careful of?)

#### **CONCLUSION:**

See handout

#### C. DO A REVERSE OUTLINE TOGETHER

-you can either **go through their essay** first and ask them to show the topics of the bodies and examples (or lack thereof) so they can see what happened **or**....

-you can just look at their writing prompt and ask the appropriate questions to help them make a "revised"/new mind map based on the ideas they may have in their heads but which may not be in their essay (or in the right place/way in their essay).

- D. If the essay seems to have some ideas but the grammar and sentence structure is really wacky, the student may have (often happens) typed the essay in their native language and then highlighted the text and pressed the translate button.
- -Don't even try to correct the grammar as it is a waste of your time and the student's (they didn't create the mistakes so they won't even know what is going on)
- \*Explain that it is cheating to translate this way
- \* Explain that translating is the worst way to deal with studies in English as the point of taking the class is to be **able to express yourself in**English.
- \* If they must translate in order to pass the class and their English is not strong enough, at least they **need to translate it themselves** as participants in the process of dealing with the English language/thinking about meaning/grammar, etc. in English
- \*If they are **not capable** of this, they should probably be placed in the native language FYSM (Chinese, etc.) or they should **take the ESL** class...someone should be alerted