

How To Use The Essay Planning Sheet

The Essay Planning Sheet was designed as a conversation between you and your audience. To begin, generate your thesis statement and place it in the space indicated as *main idea/thesis* on the Essay Planning Sheet.

Should this thesis statement be given to a reader, the receiver would probably ask "Why?" or "What?" or "How?" In response to this anticipated question, you should answer the question three or more times. Three reasonable Important Supporting Ideas would undoubtedly convince the reader that your thesis is valid. At the beginning of each middle paragraph on the Essay Planning sheet, the question "Why?" or "What?" or "How?" should be written and a specific TOPIC SENTENCE answer should be given in the space provided. Obviously, which Important Supporting Idea question you use will be dependent on your thesis.

For example, the thesis, "Wayne Gretzky is a hero who commands attention and respect" would necessitate the question "Why? Why is Wayne Gretzky a hero who commands attention and respect?" asked at least three times to generate at least three important supporting ideas (topic sentences).

Each new topic sentence will in turn generate questions of its own. For example, if the thesis statement above generated the topic sentence/important supporting idea, "As talented as he was during his playing career, the superstar remained humble", detail questions that come to mind include: How did Gretzky show his humility? On what occasions did he display humility? To whom did he typically show humble behaviour? These detail questions should be noted in the spaces provided for detail questions on the Essay Planning Sheet. Rather than statements, asking questions tends to generate additional questions which can be rearranged to advance your argument.