Steps to Writing a Body Paragraph for Expos

A guide to the mechanics,

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Topic Sentence

- Introduce the focus of the paragraph
- Will show how this paragraph supports your argument
- Likely will have key term (or terms) that have appeared in your thesis
- Write a ”shitty first draft” of this sentence; plan to return to it later

Yes, “shitty first drafts” is a technical term!

> —”All good writers write them. This is how they end up with good second drafts and terrific third drafts.”
>
> Anne Lamott

Quotation 1

- Introduce it and provide context of where it occurs in the source
- Example: Tolentino uses her own experience in the Barre studio to explore what she calls “the mechanisms that help you adapt to arbitrary, prolonged agony” (76).

(Yes, I deliberately chose a quotation with the word agony in it to show you that I care about the anti-feelings that you may be having about writing right now.)

Analyze Quotation 1

- Why have you chosen this quotation?
- Close read important words
  - For instance, in the quotation above, I might think about the word mechanism and how it suggests ideas of dehumanization and uniformity—and how that word choice serves Tolentino's larger argument about the "ideal woman."
- Do not summarize (unless you need to VERY BRIEFLY explain a little more about how this quotation fits into the source's larger argument)
- How is this quotation useful for your argument?

Transition to next quotation

- Display connective thinking:
  - Is there an idea that is similar that you will discuss (“yes and…”)
  - Does the second author agree but offer a refining idea: (“yes, but…”)
  - Are you complicating or rejecting the first concept?: (”no, because …”)

- RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO USE A SECOND QUOTATION FROM THE SAME AUTHOR—too often single-author paragraphs lead to summary

Quotation 2

- Same process as in Quotation 1: Introduce it and provide the context of where it occurs in the source

- Should be from a different reading

Note: do limit this essay (AE1) to two quotations per paragraph

Analyze Quotation 2

- Similar to the analysis of quotation 1
- Add in the element of conversation
- Elaborate on the ideas that you suggested in the transition
  - Yes, and
  - Yes, but
  - No, because

Ending the paragraph

What intellectual work has this paragraph done that develops your argument?

How can you show a connection to the ideas in the next paragraph?