Ready Writing

Trends, Tips, and Toolkits

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Ready Writing Personifications

The Expert

The Jack of All Trades

The Grocery Shopper

The Paroxysmic

Ready Writing Personifications: The Expert

- Experts tend to select a meta framework and elucidate across examples or nuanced angles of one specific period or issue.
  - E.g., framing Nazi psychology with jouissance before evaluating its impacts on Jews, broader Germany, and all of World War II.

- Experts leverage specific examples underneath overarching frameworks; frameworks act more as paradigms than as examples themselves for most of the essay.

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Pros	Cons
- Can breathe new life into tired examples - Establishes cohesiveness - Nearly always wins due to cerebral quality and perceptiveness - Avoid formulaic feel	- Requires multiple nuances to not seem like one long example - Does not always mix well with extended metaphor strategies - Needs airtight logic

Ready Writing Personifications: The Jack of All Trades

- Jacks represent the more traditional Ready Writing contestants who defend a thesis with examples across fields. Most previous state champions fit in this category.

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Pros
- Fares well with traditional judges looking specifically for example breadth
- Can establish a well-rounded defense
- Somewhat easy setup

Cons
- Requires strong conceptual transitions to blend examples
- Can become formulaic
- Metaphors easily grow belabored and bloated

Ready Writing Personifications: The Grocery Shopper

- Shoppers typically represent writers on their ways to becoming jacks. Unlike jacks, shoppers merely list examples without sufficient application or analysis and can rely too heavily on one discipline to defend their theses.

- Shoppers' most perceptive ideas often come in introductions and conclusions, though theses are often too broad or too narrow.

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Pros
- Can garner example breadth points if examples are specific

Cons
- Essay clarity suffers from unconnected ideas in body paragraphs
- Examples often remain too vague to count
- Unlikely to advance past district/region

Ready Writing Personifications: The Paroxysmic

- Paroxysmics represent an inability to engage with nuance or discourse in an appropriate manner, particularly when topics present a political lean. Language in paroxysmal submissions can border on violently polemical.

- Paroxysmics typically frame groups categorically and struggle to interpret competition prompts. Fallacies, especially ad hominem and the genetic fallacy, plague essays.

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Pros
- Exhibits writer's passion and conviction

Cons
- Displays a lack of understanding
- Will not place at higher levels
- Undermines critical thinking development

This, Not That

This	**That**
• Spending 5–10 minutes ideating on **nuances/conceptual pivots** for each prompt	• Constructing a thesis from your first idea after reading the prompts **or** copying the prompt's argument verbatim
• Focusing an initial outline on ideas and logical progressions	• Focusing an initial outline on examples
• Aggregating unique examples from distinct disciplines or identifying novel spins on common examples (sparingly!)	• Rehashing trite examples (e.g., Hitler, Japanese internment, the year's Lit Crit novel, your freshman reading assignment)
• Pointing the thesis while remaining broad enough to encapsulate the body paragraphs' content	• Restricting the thesis to a contention that is narrower or broader in concept than the body paragraphs
• Crafting a **brief** extended metaphor, paradigm, or hook	• Belaboring a metaphor with verbosity or quoting the prompt instead/wasting time on forcing a metaphor
• Beginning each paragraph with a conceptual topic sentence that elucidates a nuance of the thesis	• Replacing topic sentences with example introductions
• Analyzing or applying examples to the body paragraph's central point to support the thesis	• Describing the example and ending the paragraph
• Including internal summaries as transitions (transitioning with concepts or phrases)	• Jumping from paragraph to paragraph with no transitions or mere transition words (e.g., "also," "next," "furthermore")
• Leveraging sardonic language strategically and responsibly	• Ranting, falling into fallacies, advancing unmerited universal claims about psychologies or groups of people
• Tying the hook into a conclusion that advances the thesis	• Writing a merely summative conclusion, beginning with "In conclusion," or writing only metaphorically
• Weaving the hook into the title	• Forgetting a title
• Revising intro and thesis before printing	• Forgoing revisions or forgetting to print

A Metaphor for Effective Example Integration

Goal: Create a realistic painting

Integrated/analyzed examples: Additive brushstrokes

Fallacious or unconnected ideas: Random brushstrokes

Example lists: Leaving paint in the cans

Polemics: Punching through the canvas

Each paragraph should be an additive brush stroke on the canvas — it should *do something* for the thesis

Toolkits

Excursus: The Power of Philosophical Prowess

Provides meta-level framing opportunities

Aids in uniqueness and perceptiveness

Benefits internal logic and critical thinking

Applies across topics and submissions structures

The most recent 6A state champions relied heavily on philosophy — it's worth a shot!

Excursus: Sample Philosophical Inquiries

Continental Philosophy
- How do I relate to others?
- Is the scientific method the only way to understand natural phenomena?

Metaphysics
- Do we have free will?
- What grounds being?
- How do brains relate to personhood?

Political Philosophy
- When is war justified?
- What are rights?
- How does the nature of man structure societies?

Ethics
- What constitutes virtue?
- Is culpability transferable?
- What is the good?

Philosophy of Religion
- Does God exist?
- What is the meaning of humankind's existence?
- How do religions interact?

Epistemology
- What is knowledge?
- Can we know the external world?
- When do I have justification for a belief?

Pro tip: Research themes or thinkers via the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

Tools and Underutilized Resources

① ChatGPT* to practice region and state prompt interpretation.

② ChatGPT* to uncover nuances or rebuttals (especially helpful for paroxysmics)

③ Research centers (Pew, Cato Institute, Harvard, DARPA)

④ Philosophy! Classics! Science!

*Do not leverage ChatGPT for research; large language models remain prone to hallucinations.

Questions?

THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING

Registration link, presentations and handouts are available on the website.

Remember to register your attendance for each session.

Handouts & More

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