

Body Paragraphs

Check List

- Topic sentence (usually the first sentence) with key words from thesis
- At least two SPECIFIC examples (more for a higher score)
- At least one explanatory sentence for each specific example
- Transitional sentences and words to link the ideas together
- A concluding sentence; however, this may be left out on body paragraphs within a longer essay

Example

Topic sentence with key words (bolded)

Twain himself was a master at using his **incisive humor** to promote a more **free society**. He most often accomplished this through satire, and his most famous satirical piece is *Huckleberry Finn*. In this book an "uncivilized" boy shows the reader the restrictions with, specifically, Southern society.

This is a transition phrase. It starts a transition sentence that leads into the example.

Twain, through Huck, has several targets. One of his targets is the concept of Southern honor. Twain satirizes this when he has two families involved in a feud. Buck, the young man in one of the families who befriends Huck, explains what a feud is to the ignorant narrator. When Huck asks what started the feud between the families, Buck said no one can even remember. However, all the members of the two families are restricted by the animosity between them. When a girl from one family and a boy from another fall in love, they are not allowed to openly pursue their courtship. Instead, a violent confrontation occurs. **While the initial conversation between Huck and Buck is humorous, a few short pages later, Buck and several of his kinsmen are dead after a gun fight, showing the tragedy inherent in such habitual hatred.** But the most important objects of Twain's satire in *Huckleberry Finn* are racism and slavery. The main character Jim, an escaped slave who is Huck's companion throughout the book, expresses the horrors of what it is like to not be free. Many times, these expressions are humorous because of their irony, but they are still very revealing.

These several sentences here describe an EVENT in the book; this is a specific example.

(For example, at one point after they both run away, Huck and Jim are bemoaning the fact that they are short on money, but then Jim says, "Yes-en I's rich now, come to look at it. I owns myself, en I's wuth eight hund'd dollars. I wisht I had de money, I wouldn't want no mo.") **Certainly, there is humor in the irony of Jim realizing, for the first time, that he "owns" himself--but still admitting he would rather just have the money he's "worth," a mere \$800. But this makes a much more serious point about the degradation of slavery and the value of human life.**

Another transition introducing the second example

Another transition introducing a quote

Here's the specific example, a quote.

This paragraph has no concluding sentence because I'm going on to the next paragraph.

**Explanation sentences are bolded and italicized!*

What makes a specific example?

There are only three things that "count" as a specific example:

- A FACT
- An EVENT
- A QUOTE

A FACT is not debatable; it's not an opinion. For example, "Ben Franklin was a funny guy" is an opinion. "Ben Franklin wrote a best selling almanac as the character Poor Richard" is a fact.

An EVENT is something that happened. It can either be a paraphrase of an event in a story, or it can be an event in your own life. "I was happy" is not an event or a specific example. "I got the exact bike I wanted for my tenth birthday" is an event.

A direct QUOTE means that you copy the exact words from a text, put them in quotation marks, and give them proper credit (or cite them). A direct quote does NOT have to be the words a character said, but it may be. Oh, and it also should actually support/make sense with what you're trying to show/prove. Not just any old quote will do!