

Tier 2.5: Pre-Writing Worksheet 2a

How to Shape Your Body Paragraphs

Overall: You should plan to have three body paragraphs, each with a different topic: one on important similarities between the two texts, one on important differences between the two, and a final one that argues that Jackson's novel was or was not influenced by Gilman's story.

Each similarity/difference body paragraph should have:

- A topic sentence that names the authors *and* the titles of the stories and uses the words “similarities” or “differences” as appropriate to your paragraph topic. Your topic sentence will be exactly one sentence long and will be the first sentence of your paragraph.
- A short, one sentence summary of each story to give readers a general understanding of what is going on in the stories to be able to then make sense of the context of some of the similarities or differences. (This is probably less necessary/not needed for your second body paragraph.)
- A transition/lead in into your first similarity/difference.
- A short transition into your direct quote from the first story that shows the similar/different characteristic from that text. This transition should likely explain what is happening at the time of your quote, who is speaking, etc., to help contextualize the quote.
- The actual direct quote from this first story that shows the similar/different characteristic from that text, followed by a correct citation.
- A short transition into your direct quote from the other story that shows the similar/different characteristic from that text. Again, this might explain what is happening at the time of your quote, who is speaking, etc.
- The direct quote from the second story that shows the similar/different characteristic from that text, followed by a correct citation.
- A full explanation of *how* those two quotes are showing a critical similarity/difference between the two texts. You'll first clarify exactly what the similarity/difference is as seen from the two quotes, but you'll go on to argue why this similarity/difference is, in fact, important (within the context of determining influence). Your explanations of your quotes will follow each pairing of quotes, and these explanations are by far the most important part of your paragraph, as the quotes will prove nothing by themselves.
- Some kind of transition to lead the reader into the next similarity/difference.
- REPEAT ABOVE EVIDENCE/EXPLANATION STEPS AS NECESSARY. Remember that these paragraphs make up your ability to argue that Jackson was or was not influenced/ by *Gilman's* story. You need to fully develop these paragraphs, or else you have too little to base your argument on later. You should try to really best develop the paragraph that you believe better ties to your argument (for example: if you believe she *was* influenced by Gilman's story, you should really develop the similarity paragraph especially well. If you believe she *wasn't* influenced by Gilman's story, you should develop the differences paragraph especially well). **However**, *having too few ideas in either paragraph reduces your credibility to make any argument about influence at all.*
- A restatement of your topic sentence with all the same key words and parts, etc., as your topic sentence. Your TSR (topic sentence restatement) will be exactly one sentence long, and it will be the final sentence of your paragraph.

Your evaluation/argumentative paragraph should have:

- A topic sentence that clearly states that Jackson's novel was or was not inspired by Gilson's story. Include the authors' names and the story titles.

- References to the similarities and the differences made in previous paragraphs and explanations of why those similarities and differences suggest that the novel was/was not influenced/inspired by Gilman’s story. **Your explanations are critical**—think of it as a “weighing” of the different “columns” of a list (the similarities and the differences). You might argue that what makes them similar is more important than what makes them different or vice versa. However, most importantly you must explain **WHY** the reader should see how those points (whether similarities or differences) outweigh the other. Do not bring up new similarities and differences that were not addressed in the previous paragraphs. Also do not leave out the similarities and differences that you *did* mention in the other paragraphs. You mentioned those important similarities/differences to help show why you think Jackson’s novel was/was not influenced/inspired by Gilman’s story. Leaving them out in this paragraph suggests that those earlier points were never important to begin with. Finally: do not simply base your argument on the similarities mentioned in the prompt itself. Those will not be considered as your ideas. **IMPORTANT:** This paragraph is almost entirely what determines your support score for the essay.
- A restatement of your topic sentence with all the same key words and parts, etc., as your topic sentence. Your TSR (topic sentence restatement) will be exactly one sentence long, and it will be the final sentence of your paragraph.

Some other things to consider:

- Transition between your paragraphs by using a transitional word or phrase in your second paragraph's topic sentence. For example, you might say, “However, whereas...”
- Use the full titles and handle the titles of the stories correctly. Short story titles go in quotation marks. For example, “The Yellow Wallpaper” is the story, whereas the yellow wallpaper is the actual wallpaper in the story. The novel *The Haunting of Hill House* is to be written in italics, not in quotation marks.
- If dialogue exists within your quote, turn any original quotation marks into single quotes. Double quotes will only be used to begin and end *your* quote. For example: “‘And take notes,’ Theodora mumbled.” (Jackson 50).
- When you refer to an author in your essay, refer to her by her last name, **not** her first name. However, the first time you refer to an author, it’s generally considered preferable to use their full name. Every time after, the last name alone is appropriate.
- Avoid any 1st person (do not refer to yourself or to your paragraph).