





Lesson 8

Materials Needed:

-  Journal
-  Pen or pencil
-  The Novel you have selected to read
-  Dictionary
- or {
 - Highlighter
 - Post-it® notes

Review

You have now read more than half of your book. Before you go on, you need to organize your thoughts and reflect on what the author has told you thus far. In this lesson you are going to write an essay based on the book. To help you do this, review the Story Summary sheets you have been working on at the end of this unit. Also take a look at your Journal entries and the character descriptions you did in Lesson 4.

Essay topic

Compare and contrast the antagonist and protagonist in the novel. What characteristics do they have that are similar? What characteristics are different? How is the author using these characters or elements to move the plot along?

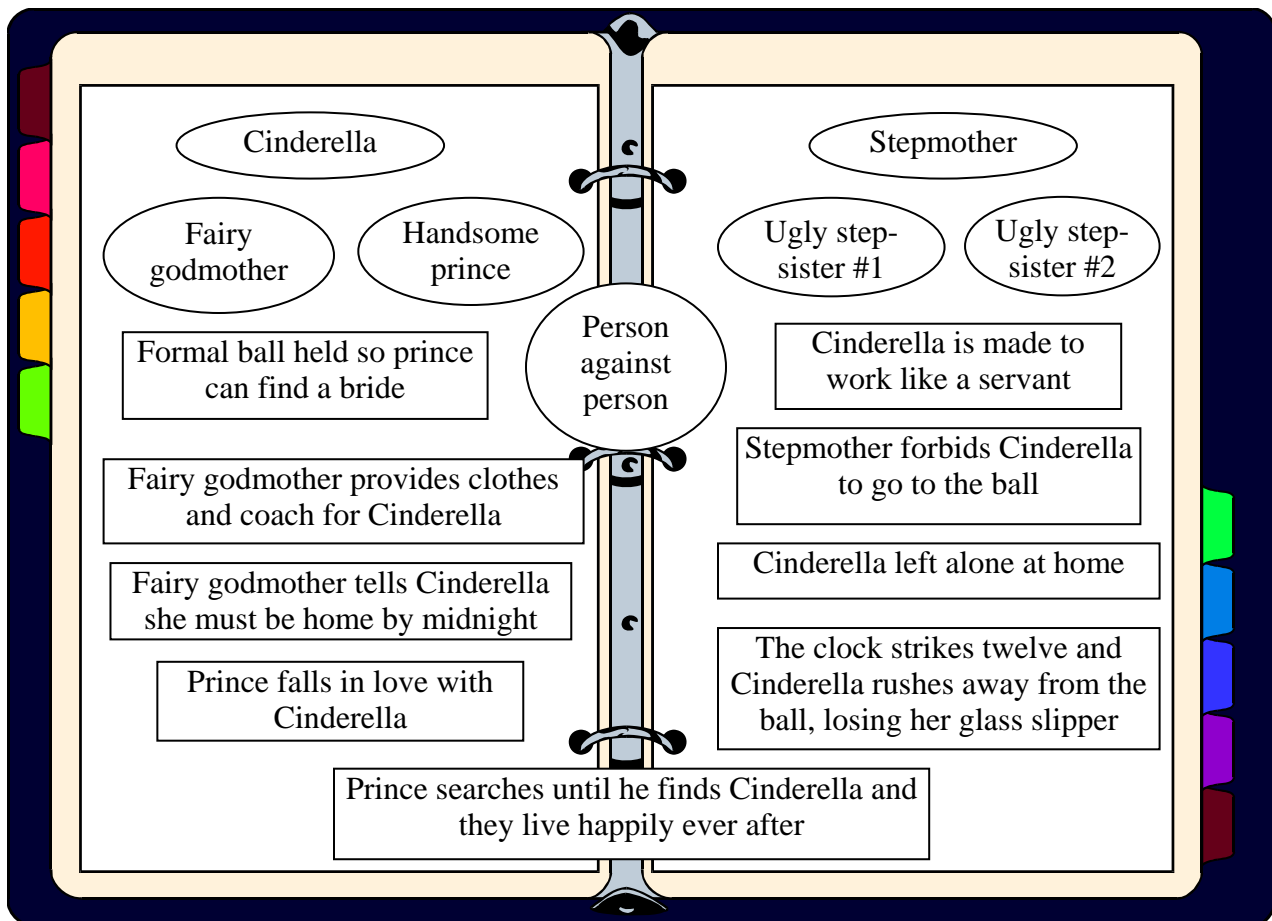
Collect and connect

First, brainstorm and organize. To help with this process, let's use a technique called a Structured Overview.

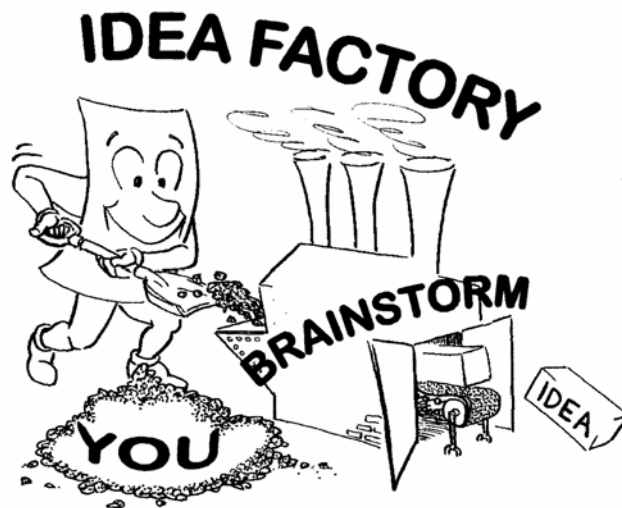
1. Take two pieces of notebook paper and tape them together or open a spiral notebook so that you have two empty pages side by side.
2. Put the main point of tension or conflict in the center of the paper. You can use Post-it® notes or write it on the paper. You will arrange various pieces of the novel around this central point.

3. Now make a chart of the story. From your Story Summary sheet, take characters and things that have happened so far and place them around the conflict or complication you have placed in the center of the page. Your goal is to show the relationships among characters and plot incidents. How do people and actions fit together in the story?

Hint: Try putting the protagonist with supporting characters on one side and the antagonist with related supporting characters on the facing page. Take a look at the sample Structured Overview below. It uses the fairy tale *Cinderella* to give you an idea of how this works.



Use your Structured Overview to help you brainstorm ideas and plan your essay. Then do a fast write of your essay on a separate piece of paper. **Fast writing** is writing which is not corrected. You don't plan what you are going to write. You write whatever comes to your mind in relation to the topic. You don't stop to correct spelling or punctuation. You should continue writing so you don't lose track of what you are thinking.



Good writers are **fluent** writers. One of our goals is to help **you** become a fluent writer. This means that you will be able to write easily and quickly to put a lot of ideas down on paper. You are already a fluent speaker. You can talk to a friend for a long time. You don't stop to plan the conversation or to correct your grammar. If you keep stopping to make corrections in what you are saying, you forget your idea or thought.

Organizing the Rough Draft

1. Introductory paragraph: You need a first sentence that will grab the reader's interest and attention by doing one of the following:

- asking a question;
- quoting a passage relating to the novel;
- defining a word relating to the novel; or
- stating a fact.

The second sentence should include the title, author, and genre (novel) of the work. You want to say something like: “In the novel A Painted House by John Grisham, a family in Arkansas....” The last sentence should focus on the **thesis statement** you want to prove in your essay. It could begin something like, “There are many similarities between Panchito and....” or “There are many differences between....” or “There are some similarities and some differences between....”

- 2. Developmental or internal paragraphs (Body):** Your second paragraph will compare similarities of the antagonist and protagonist. Your third paragraph will contrast the antagonist and protagonist, showing their differences.
- 3. Final paragraph (Conclusion):** Your last paragraph will be your conclusion. It will give examples of how the protagonist’s and antagonist’s similarities or differences move the plot along. You should not present any new ideas at this time. The first sentence in your final paragraph should be a rewording of your thesis statement (the last sentence of your introduction). End with a strong closing sentence—the **clincher** that wraps up what you are trying to say.

Revising

Now it is time to revise the rough draft of your literary essay. You will follow the process of revising, editing, and rewriting. Doing this will help you improve your writing skills.

Answer the following questions about your essay. You will need to read carefully.



Introduction

1. Is there an attention-getter for the first sentence? Find it and highlight it.
2. Did you include the title, author and genre? Highlight them.
3. Is there a clear thesis statement? Find and highlight it.

Body

4. Is there an opening sentence for each paragraph that lets the reader know what the paragraph is about? Find and highlight them.
5. Are there examples from the story to support the opinion expressed in the thesis statement?
6. Does each paragraph present a different idea, viewpoint or argument?

Conclusion

7. Does the first sentence of the final paragraph contain a rewording of the thesis statement?
8. Have you avoided adding any new ideas?
9. Does the last sentence contain a clincher—a strong statement?

If you could not find all of these elements, go back and add them where needed.

Editing

Answer the following questions concerning your essay.

1. Are all of the sentences complete? A great way to check this is to read each sentence aloud, starting with the LAST sentence at the end of your essay.
2. Is the punctuation correct? Check commas, periods, and apostrophes.
3. Are any words misspelled? Circle any word that you think may be misspelled and then look it up in the dictionary. If you are using a computer, use the spell checker; just remember that you should not rely completely on this tool. Some typographical errors or misspellings are still words so the spell check doesn't always pick up on them.
4. Have you used any of your new vocabulary words? The best way to add new words to your vocabulary is to find ways to use them.

Copy your finished essay into your Journal or insert a computer printout. Save each step in the process—structured overview, rough draft and revisions. Your mentor will want to see that you did each step in the writing process.

Use the space on the next page to write down any questions you have for your mentor or PASS contact person.

