

Goals & Expectations

1. Focused thesis statement & topic sentences
2. Provide context where necessary
3. Naturally integrate quotes
4. Analyze your evidence — *your* voice, *your* angle
5. Reference the opposition
6. Cite your sources (MLA format) — ignore the made-up system for now
7. No works cited page unless you bring in another source
8. Reference all THREE texts or bad things will happen

Questions You Should Consider

- Do you think the U.S. prison system needs reform?
- Is Norway's prison system effective?
- Do you think the U.S. has anything to learn from Norway's prison system?
- What does America's prison system do correctly?
- What statistics support your claim?

Your Claim

- Answer the question
- Should be the last sentence in your introduction
- Should include your answer and the general reasons why

The Introduction

- Use an introductory strategy: anecdote, startling fact, image/poetic language, pertinent and engaging background
- Make sure you transition
- Establish what the issue is
- You could make reference to the opposition — avoid “some people think...while others think”
- End with sophisticated, insightful thesis

Acknowledging the Opposition

- Do more than briefly mention it: respect it, refute it, and/or render it negligible!
- Don't make things up.
- Address the opposition when it is relevant to do so.

Student Sample Intro

In the United States, “76.6% of prisoners are re-arrested within five years” (Sterbenz), and so it goes without saying that the United States’ prison system is in dire need of rescue and reform. The root of the issue lies in the way the U.S. treats its prisoners; in contrast to Norway’s prison system, the primary purpose of America’s system is to punish, rather than rehabilitate. Although journalists have exposed Norway’s struggle with overcrowded prisons, debatably because of the country’s unusually humane fashion of treating its prisoners — transition into claim and thesis.

Student Sample Thesis

The United States should adopt Norway's prison system, for Norway's primary goal is to rehabilitate the prisoners and treat them humanly, not punish them, and as a result, the country has a significantly lower rate of "recidivism" (Zoukis).

Topic Sentences

- Always start each paragraph with a **relevant** topic sentence.
- Answer the question and provide your reason.
- Topic sentences tell the reader what the rest of the paragraph is about.

Body paragraphs: 2-3

- Cite
- Context
- Reference facts, statistics, and expert opinions.
- Analyze these facts, statistics, and expert opinions.
 - What do *YOU* think about them?
 - How do they support your angle or perspective?
 - Draw conclusions, make inferences about these details.
 - Relate them to your thesis and claim.

Conclusion

- Restate your topic and its importance.
- Restate your thesis in OTHER WORDS.
- End your essay on a powerful note.
- Bring in more compelling evidence or details that tie everything together.
- Make predictions; paint a picture of what the world will look like if we side or don't side with you.
- This is your final chance to change the world!

EDIT

- Proofread
 - Colons
 - Semicolons
 - Commas — conjunctions
 - Agreement
 - Run ons, splices, fragments
 - No personal pronouns
 - No contractions