

Writing Intensive Training

Strategies for writing tutoring across subjects



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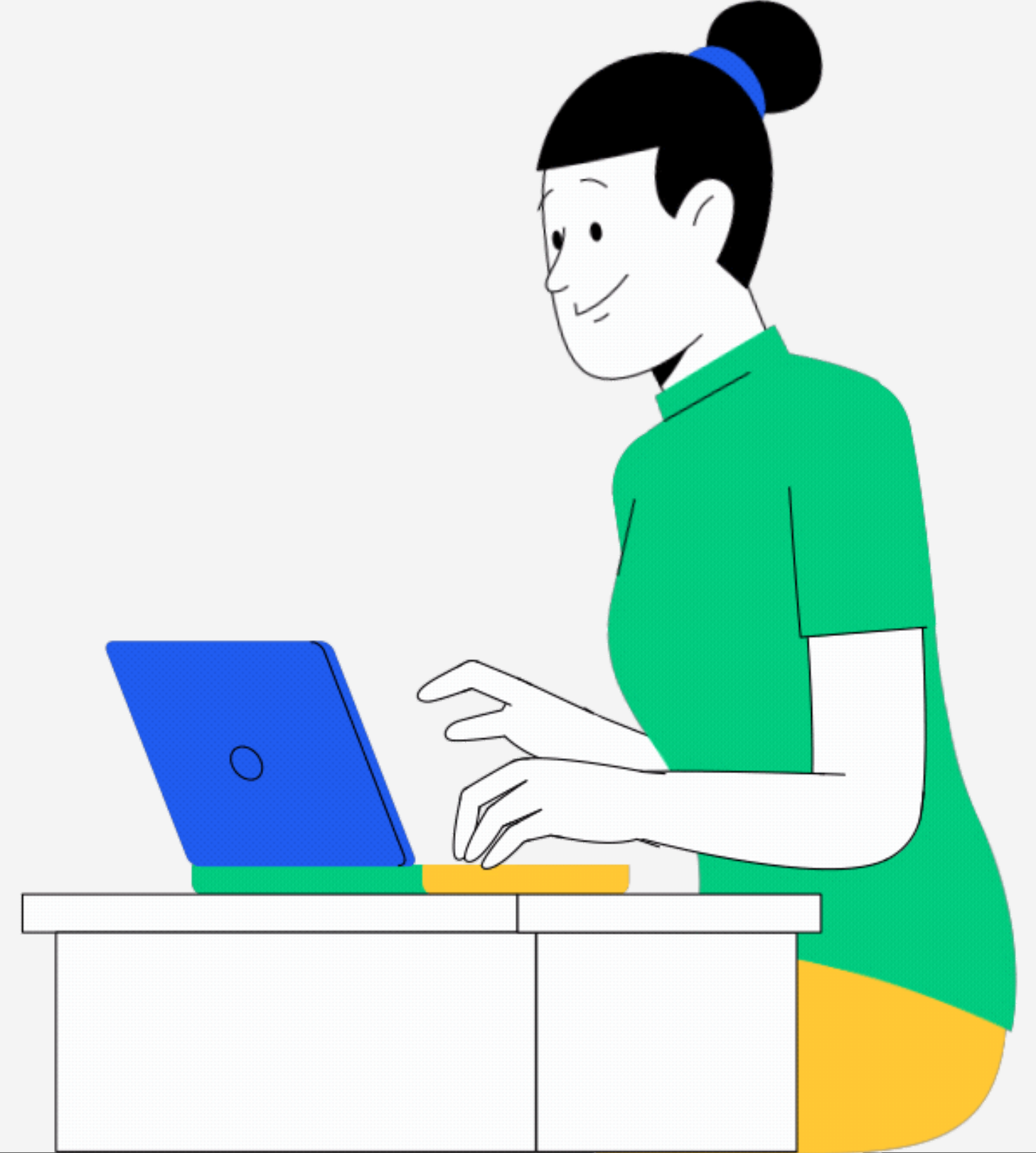


What We're Learning Today

Here are the topics we will cover today:

- Thesis, the backbone of a paper
- Global vs local
- Elements of a paper
- Types of writing
- Grammar/Sentence Structure
- Sample Writing

What is a thesis?

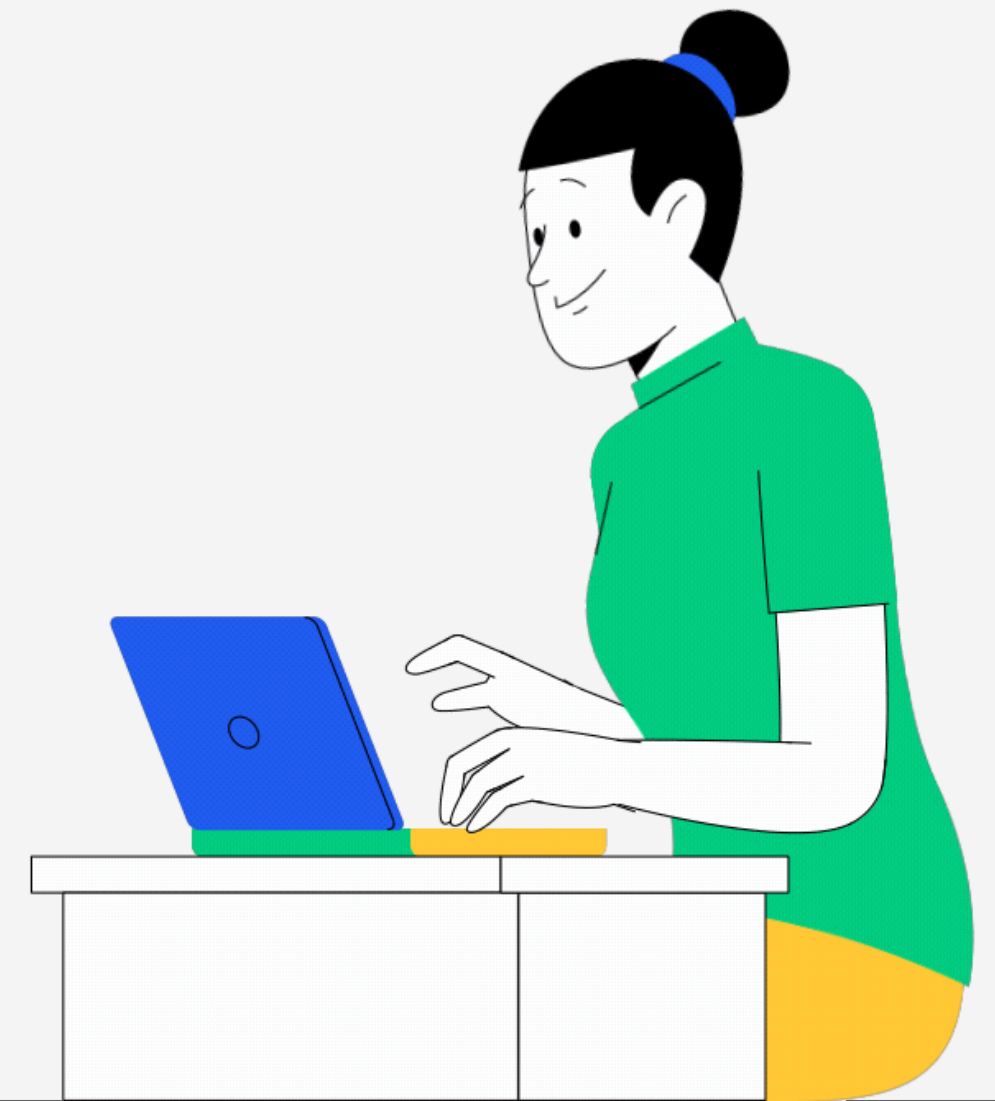


What is a thesis?

A thesis is the backbone of your paper. It tells your reader what the purpose of your paper is, and what you are trying to argue. Usually consists of 3 parts:

1. Topic
2. Position
3. Reasons

Example: Our dependence on technology has decreased humanity's compassion because it allows us to disconnect from other people and negatively impacts social skills.



Components of a Good Thesis



1 Answers a specific question and expresses one idea.

2 Takes a distinct position on a topic.

3 Is debatable (a reasonable person could argue otherwise)

4 Appropriately focused based on assignment.

5 Allows reader to anticipate the organization of your paper

Sample theses

All of these theses have room for improvement. How could you help someone in a session make these stronger?

[They Say/i Say Link](#)

World hunger has many causes and effects.

Businesses need to treat employees better.

There are so few women in the maritime industry because of sexism in the industry.

There are a variety of alternatives to fossil fuel, each with their own advantages and disadvantages.

Companies need to exploit the marketing potential of websites, and instagram can provide both advertising and customer support.

1

GLOBAL



Things that affect the whole paper: such as the overall argument, the structure, or the type of writing



Start with global because once you change the big things, a lot of the small things (local) will shift naturally



What you focus on in a session is still up to the tutee, but suggest global as a way to start

2

LOCAL



Smaller aspects of the paper, like grammar, sentence structure, intraparagraph structure



These parts of a paper are still important, but it is easy to get bogged down in the minutiae of a paper and forget about bigger things



Oftentimes, the local work can only be partially completed, it is more about showing the tutee how it is done, rather than finishing the work.

Global Strategies: Revision

MEMORY DRAFT

1. Tutee goes through the main points of the paper from memory. You take notes.
2. Compare the memory draft with the actual draft.
3. What was different? Is what the tutee thought they were doing different than the actual?

REVERSE OUTLINE

1. With the paper in front of you, go through each paragraph and ask tutee the main argument and their evidence. Take notes in an outline format.
2. Once you have the reverse outline, edit that together for flow, connection to the thesis, and necessary vs unnecessary info.

PLAY OUT THE THESIS

1. Start with the thesis and don't think about the rest of the paper.
2. Ask the tutee: "what is the first thing your reader needs to know in order to prove this claim?"
3. Keep moving like that until you have completely played out the thesis.
4. Compare that to the existing paper.

Global Strategies: Brainstorming

BREAK DOWN THE ASSIGNMENT

1. Pick apart everything the assignment is asking. Look for verbs like "connect" or "argue" or "prove."
2. Ask the tutee to connect the content of the prompt with what they learned in class.
3. What are the specifics of the assignment? Help them see what things like page count mean for their paper.

FREE WRITING

1. Start with the thesis or topic at the top of their page.
2. Have the tutee write for 5 minutes without stopping (it will seem long).
3. Look through what they have written and pick out interesting elements to start an outline.

CREATE AN OUTLINE

1. Similar to "play out the thesis" on the last slide, except you don't have a completed paper.
2. Ask the tutee "what is the first thing you need to do to prove your thesis?" and go from there to create an outline.

**What are
all the
elements
of a
paper?**



What are all the elements of a paper?

**Introduction
(w/ thesis)**

Evidence

Body paragraphs

Transitions

Conclusion

Citations

INTRODUCTIONS

Broad to Narrow

Give the basic details

Just jump right in

End with the thesis

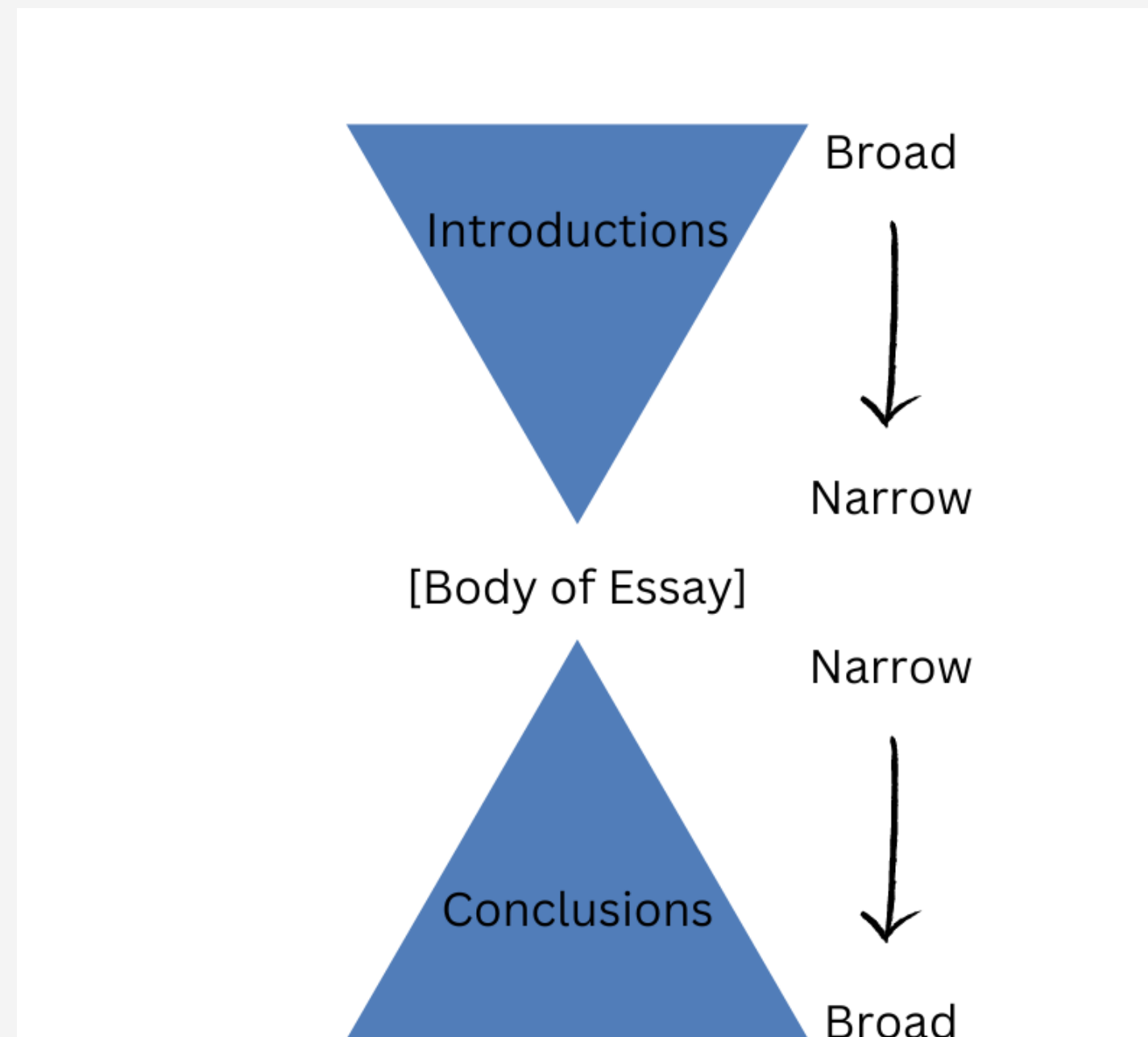
CONCLUSIONS

Narrow to Broad

Restate the thesis

The "So What"

Anything else to know?



How to use evidence



Best ways to help your tutee use evidence in the correct and most logical, ways

Introduce Evidence

1. Use signal phrases, such as "according to X," "X criticizes," or "X explores," etc.
2. Ensure that you include the author's name, the work you are citing
3. Explain why they are important to consider; provide the context.

Give Evidence

1. Decide whether to use direct quote or paraphrase.
2. For quote, use proper format:
 - a. According to Dr. Smith, "the fault zone is in a major residential area."
3. Use in text citations as required.

Explain Evidence

1. Encourage your tutee to restate the quote, even if they seem hesitant. It shows how they understand the evidence and what is important to them.
2. Explain any important terms or phrases in the quote itself.
3. How does the quote tie back to the thesis?

Anatomy of a Paragraph

This is a strategy to help your tutees with the structure of their paragraphs.

1. Go over the different elements of a paragraph.
2. Ask them to highlight each element a different color.
3. You could do it side-by-side and see what you come up with.
4. Look over the highlighting. Is there too much evidence and not enough analysis? Is everything where it supposed to be? How much fluff?

INTRODUCTORY/CONCLUSION SENTENCE

-keep in mind they might be improperly placed

EVIDENCE

-anything that doesn't come from the mind of your author

ANALYSIS

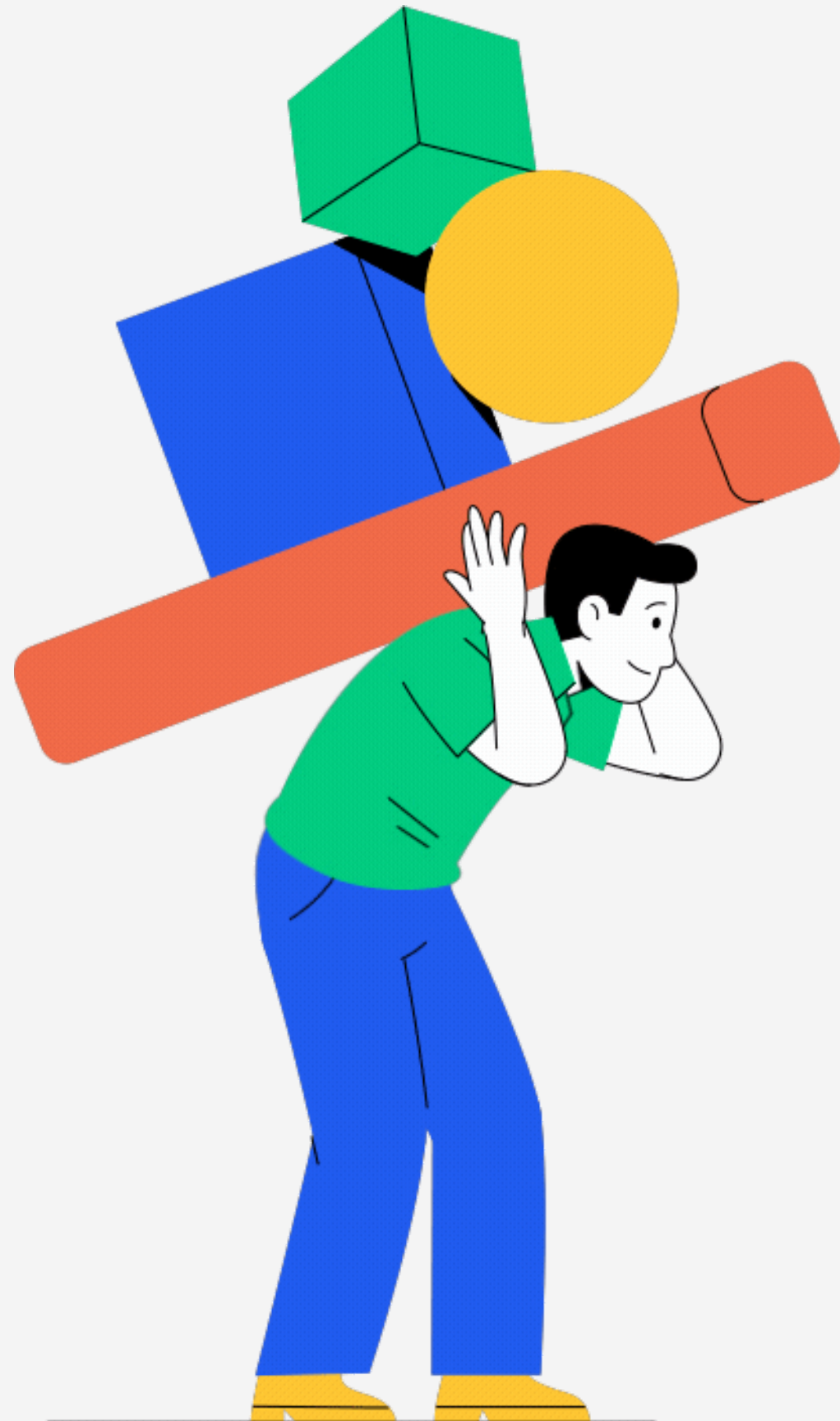
-anything that the author says that contributes to argument

TRANSITIONS

-how the author transitions from one piece to another

FLUFF

-anything that that doesn't contribute to the argument



Different Types of Writing

Especially here at Cal Maritime you will see a wide variety of types of writing.

What are some kinds of writing you have come across and/or written yourself?

Types of Writing Group Activity



01 Argumentative

1) What does the thesis look like?

02 Research

2) What is the structure?

3) What types of evidence are used?

4) What is the overall goal?

03 Lab Reports

Tutoring for Grammar

Remember that we are not a proofreading service, so you need to engage with grammar in an active way that involves your tutee.

What are some strategies you could use for these grammar concerns?

Long and/or Convolutd Sentences

-

Passive vs Active

-

Possessive/Attributive Errors
ex: "Emma walked to the store and Julie went to the pharmacy and she bought stuff, which helped her mood."

Punctuation Errors

-

Semi-Colons and Comma Splices

-

Spelling Errors

-

Tutoring for Grammar

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What are some strategies you could use for these grammar concerns?

Long and/or Convolutd Sentences

- split up the ideas
- isolate just the subject and verb

Passive vs Active

- ask "is the subject important?"
- ask "who is doing the thing"

Possessive/Attributive Errors

- look for "which" "that" or pronouns and make you the reader knows what the word is referring to

Punctuation Errors

- usually mistakes, but you can ask if they know the rules or want a review

Semi-Colons and Comma Splices

- semi-colons are to connect two independent thoughts (subject verb)
- comma splices are when a comma is put there instead

Spelling Errors

- again, usually mistakes but ask in the beginning of the session if they have proof read yet, and then if they want you to point anything out

Writing Samples

In your groups, you will be given a real writing sample from a student at Cal Maritime. Please complete the following tasks:

1. Create a scaffolded list of the biggest concerns, (aka the ones you would want to address first) down to the smaller concerns (it's okay if you don't get to it).
2. Next to each concern, write a strategy or approach you would use.
3. Think about the personal element, how do you talk about this paper, and any improvements or changes, with the student?





Reflect on your own practice

1. Do you use any of these strategies already?
2. Which tool or exercise will be the most useful for you?
3. How might your tutoring practice change after this training?