

THINGS YOU SHOULD NEVER, EVER, EVER, **EVER**, DO WHEN YOU ARE WRITING A PAPER:

- Use **I, you, me, we, us**
  - i.e. "I think that Chains is the best novel ever and this is what I think the "Chains" in Chains mean...."
- Use words such as **THINGS**, or **STUFF** to describe something
  - "Laurie Halse Anderson uses lots of historical **STUFF** in her novel."
  - "Madam Lockton does a lot of really mean **THINGS** to Isabel."

What you should **ALWAYS, UNDER EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE** include in your INTRODUCTION when you are writing about literature:

- A catchy and interesting **TITLE**
  - A good example: The "Chains" that Bind Us
  - A bad example: Chains Essay (and yes, students did use this title)
- A catchy and interesting **LEAD**
  - A good example: A single, small flame could just be enough light in a place of darkness.
  - A bad example: Chains is a book that is historical fiction.
- Provide **BACKGROUND** information about the novel in which you are writing about.
  - In the novel Chains, Laurie Halse Anderson tells the story of a young orphaned slave fighting for her freedom during the Revolutionary War.
- Define concepts that you are writing about (i.e. HISTORICAL FICTION)
  - Historical fiction can be defined as a type of fiction that has many historically accurate aspects, such as characters and events. In addition, historical fiction often portrays a point of view that is not often documented during that time period.
- Provide a clear, focused and **EASY TO PROVE** thesis
  - A good example: Chains by Laurie Halse Anderson can be considered a work of historical fiction because it has many historically accurate characters, events, and portrays a point of view that is not often documented during that time period.
  - A bad example: Chains is historical fiction, and I am going to prove it.

For each body Paragraph, you must have a clear and defined **TOPIC SENTENCE**, aka a "**MINI THESIS**."

For example, if we are working from the thesis:

Chains by Laurie Halse Anderson can be considered a work of historical fiction because it has many historically accurate characters, events, and portrays a point of view that is not often documented during that time period.

Your three clear and focused topic sentences would be:

- 1) One example of historical fiction in the novel Chains, is that Laurie Halse Anderson includes many historically accurate characters.
- 2) A second example of historical fiction in the novel Chains, is that Laurie Halse Anderson includes many historically accurate events in the novel.
- 3) Finally, a third example of historical fiction in the novel Chains, is that Laurie Halse Anderson portrays a point of view that is not often documented during the time period of the Revolutionary War.

Your next step would be to find **THREE EXAMPLES FROM THE NOVEL** that prove each "MINI-THESIS," and then explain **WHY** these examples **PROVE YOUR THESIS**.

For example, if one of your topic sentences was:

One example of historical fiction in the novel Chains, is that Laurie Halse Anderson includes many historically accurate characters.

You would next provide **EVIDENCE** that there were historically accurate characters in the novel. This does **NOT** mean that you simply say,

"George Washington was in the novel Chains, and he was a person in real life."

This is **NOT ENOUGH**. As a reader of your paper, how do I know that George Washington was in the novel? **YOU HAVE TO PROVE IT TO ME!** How do you prove it? **EVIDENCE!** What is evidence? **QUOTES! EXAMPLES!**

Therefore, a supporting detail for your first body paragraph would look something like this:

"One example of historical fiction in the novel Chains is that Laurie Halse Anderson includes many historically accurate characters in her novel. This can be exemplified by the first president of the United States, George Washington. George Washington was the actual soldier of the Patriot Army during the Revolutionary War, and he is referred to the novel several times, as well as actually appearing in the action. A reference to George Washington in the novel Chains is when several members of the Loyalist party, including Mr. Lockton, Thomas Hickey, and the Mayor of New York, plan an assassination attempt against him, "With Washington gone, the revolution with collapse... The study fell so silent, I feared the men would hear my heart beating. *Kill George Washington?*" (90).

**NOW**, after you provide your **EVIDENCE**, you must **EXPLAIN WHY** these details **SUPPORT THE THESIS**:

Although there is much debate as to whether or not the assassination attempt against George Washington actually happened during this time period, the fact that George Washington was a member of the Patriot Army, and therefore an enemy to the loyalists is historically accurate. Therefore, George Washington's presence in this novel would be a characteristic of historical fiction.

Okay. Great. Grand. You have provided **ONE SUPPORTING DETAIL**. Guess what?!?!

**NOW YOU NEED TO SUPPLY TWO MORE, FOR A GRAND TOTAL OF THREE SUPPORTING DETAILS.**

You could write about Thomas Hickey, King George III, the Mayor of New York, Nathan Hale, etc. But remember, you need to provide **PROOF** that they were in the novel, and then **EXPLAIN WHY** this proof supports your thesis.

Now what do you do? Repeat these steps, but with topic sentences #2 and #3. And then guess what? You're almost done! You just need to write a **CONCLUSION!!!!**

Some Last Reminders:

- **UNDERLINE THE TITLE OF A NOVEL, ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS**
- When you quote a novel, you **MUST PROVIDE THE PAGE NUMBER OF THE QUOTE**