

POSC 10W Workshop 1 Outline

Seven Steps to Unpacking a Prompt¹

1. Examine the assignment & underline key terms.
2. Find the context and subject of the assignment.
 - Including audience & purpose
3. Determine the primary question(s).
4. Generate an observation list.
 - List & describe as many details as you recognize without trying to understand and analyze them just yet
5. Freewrite & cluster, if necessary.
 - Generating ideas, grouping like concepts, and connecting thoughts for use as thesis statements and points of interest and analyses
6. Use abstraction to find an insightful idea, if necessary.
7. Draft a working thesis statement and revise as necessary.

Activity 1: Read assignment 1 prompt and write in your own words the *context* and *subject* for this assignment. Discuss as a class.

C-S-C: structure for a fully developed thesis statement

Context: General areas of discussion (also, the audience is important for tone/purpose)

Subject: Focus of the paper, i.e. area of analysis

Claim: Thesis & topic sentences

- *Tip:* use the **list format** or the **graduated triangle format** before moving to the **sentence format** (3 ways to visualize your thesis statement).

Example 1:

Context: WWII

Subject: Bombing of Pearl Harbor

Claim: was the most important battle of the war

- Revision of claim: demonstrated that the US government was willing to sacrifice innocent lives to justify entering the war
 - o If you'd like to narrow your thesis further, use the "Shift Left" Method.

Activity 2: In groups of 4 discuss the context and subject for both the assignment (see prompt) and Frymer's research questions (see your reading notes), working toward the goal of a draft claim/thesis for the paper. *Use the list format to organize your ideas. If you already have a draft thesis then try to break it down into these parts (CSC).*

Example 2:

Context:

Subject:

Claim:

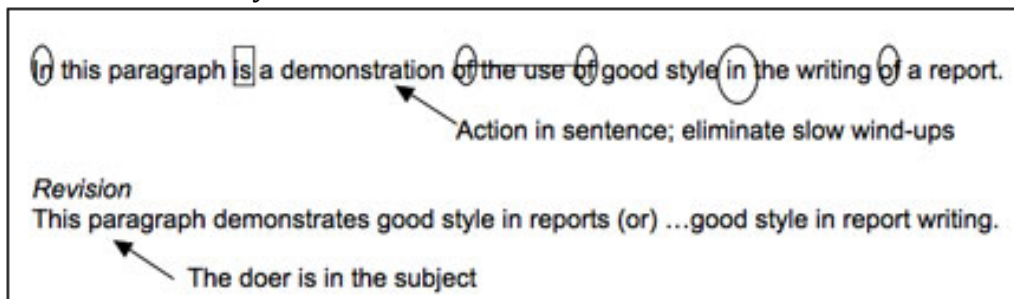
¹ From *Techniques for College Writing* (Moore & Cassel 2011: 132).

Your Claim (potential weaknesses to avoid)

- Self-evident
- Statement of fact
- Statement of summary
- Statement of a plan

Paramedic Method² & Sentence-Level Revision

1. Circle the prepositions (of, in, about, for, onto, into) & consider their removal.
2. Circle the "to be" verb forms & consider alternatives (action verbs).
 - Change the "action" into a simple verb
 - Eliminate passive voice
3. Ask, "Who's kicking whom?" i.e. find the subject, object, & action (verbs).
 - Move the doer into the subject
 - Remember the typical word order of an English sentence is: subject, verb, object
4. Start fast & only include what is necessary.
 - Eliminate any unnecessary slow wind-ups
 - Eliminate any redundancies



Activity 3: Use the *Paramedic Method* in the sentences below to practice making your sentences more clear and concise. If time, discuss as class.

1. The point I wish to make is that the elected officials working in Congress are in need of a much better manager of their communications.
2. It is widely known that the Supreme Court justices have become active participants in the protection of the rights of the minority in most years.
3. After reviewing the results of previous research, and in light of the relevant information found within the context of the study, there is ample evidence for making important, significant changes to our electoral system.

Next workshop:

Introduce **TAXES:** (Paragraph Structure)

- Topic sentence
- Assertion
- X-ample
- Explanation
- Significance

² From Purdue OWL: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/635/01/>