

Main Point assignment
Answer Guide: Essay #1: “My Name Is High”
(Analyzing a paper to find the main point)

Answer the following questions:

- 1) What is the title? **My Name is High**
What do you think the title reveals about the essay? **Someone’s Name**

Essay Body:

Introduction:

How does the introduction begin? **“Three years ago when...”**

What did the author use as an introduction? **A real life story**

What is the thesis statement?

“Having ‘High’ as a last name means that you have to tolerate constant disbelief, misspelling, and ridicule of your name.”

What are the subtopics?

- 1) **The name is constantly disbelieved**
- 2) **The name is constantly misspelled**
- 3) **The name is constantly ridiculed**

Subtopic #1:

How does Subtopic #1 begin?

“A person’s first reaction to hearing my last name is disbelief.”

What kind of transitions does the author use?

This paragraph doesn’t have a transition.

What is the subtopic thesis statement?

“For some reason, people just can’t accept the idea of having a simple last name.”

What are the subtopic examples?

- 1) **Co-worker thought she was a drug addict.**
- 2) **Mechanic thought license plate referred to high school.**
- 3) **Brother couldn’t get ‘obscene’ license plates.**
- 4) **Girls in Human Resources questioned the validity of her name**
- 5) **Co-worker thought she was a drug addict.**
- 6) **Mechanic thought license plate referred to high school.**
- 7) **Brother couldn’t get ‘obscene’ license plates.**
- 8) **Girls in Human Resources questioned the validity of her name**

Subtopic #2:

How does Subtopic #2 begin?

“Once I finally get a person to accept that my name is really ‘High’ I then must spend another ten minutes trying to get them to spell it right.”

What kind of transitions does the author use?

Familiar (disbelief) to Unfamiliar (misspell)

What is the subtopic thesis statement?

“Once I finally get a person to accept that my name is really ‘High’ I then must spend another ten minutes trying to get them to spell it right.”

Note: The transition and the subtopic thesis statement are one in the same; but the substance of the thesis statement is what is underlined.

What are the subtopic examples?

- 1) **Asked “How do you spell it?”**
- 2) **Several examples of misspelled mail** (*See above for how this explicit detail paints a picture that the audience can “see in their mind.”*)
- 3) **Must spell it or allow them to see it in writing**
- 4) **Miss Ihigh**
- 5) **Miss Hith**
- 6) **Miss Hyde**
- 7) **Miss Hight**
- 8) **Miss Hi**
- 9) **Miss Highland**
- 10) **Miss Hill**

Subtopic #3:

How does Subtopic #3 begin?

“After I have finally convinced a person that my name is . simply ‘High’, they usually laugh and start telling me some ‘High’ jokes.”

What kind of transitions does the author use?

Familiar (misspell) to Unfamiliar (redicule)

What is the subtopic thesis statement?

“After I have finally convinced a person that my name is . simply ‘High’, they usually laugh and start telling me some ‘High’ jokes.”

Note: The transition and the subtopic thesis statement are one in the same; but the substance of the thesis statement is what is underlined.

What are the subtopic examples?

- 1) **Greetings from co-workers**

- 2) The typical/traditional/classic “High” jokes
- 3) The brother is teased for being tall
- 4) Smith
- 5) Jones
- 6) Hi, High
- 7) High, are you high?
- 8) Why are you short?
- 9) High, Kathleen!
- 10) I wish I was high
- 11) Sky High

Conclusion:

How does the conclusion begin?

“In conclusion, ...”

Was the thesis statement restated? How?

Yes, “...I tend to pause after being asked my last name and think to myself, I hate this question,’ because I know what to expect next: first, disbelief, then my name misspelled; and finally, endless ridicule.”

Were the subtopics restated? How? **Yes: disbelieved, misspelled; and endless ridicule**

What is the “so what” statement?

**The name is such a headache, that it should only be a result of birth rather than choice: “...I put up with it because the benefit of a new last name is not enough justification for getting married...
...I can’t understand why my mother and sisters-in-law would voluntarily take the name! ...”**

Now in the space below, outline the essay by writing the thesis statement, supporting points, and the conclusion.

There are many problems associated with having a simple last name of “High”.

- 1) **The name is constantly disbelieved**
- 2) **The name is constantly misspelled**
- 3) **The name is constantly ridiculed**

The name should only be accepted if given in birth, and not chosen voluntarily through marriage.

Next, reflect on this outline for a few minutes. Turn this paper over and try to rewrite from memory the main points of the essay on the back of this assignment without referring back.

Main Point – Answer Guide

Now that you have learned how to look for the main point, take a few minutes to reflect on what you learned through this exercise.

Main Point assignment

Answer Guide: Essay #2 “Mama Bear”
(Analyzing a paper to find the main point)

Answer the following questions:

- 2) What is the title? **Mama Bear**
What do you think the title reveals about the essay? **Mother bears?**

Essay Body:

Introduction:

How does the introduction begin? **“How many movies have you seen where...”**

What did the author use as an introduction? **A movie scenario**

What is the thesis statement?

“I believe that it is instinctive for females of many species to be very protective of their offspring; and humans are no different.”

What are the subtopics?

- 1) **Passive mothers can turn into grizzly bears**
- 2) **Poised mothers can turn into grizzly bears**
- 3) **Intellectual mothers can turn into grizzly bears**

Subtopic #1:

How does Subtopic #1 begin?

“Even the most passive mother can turn into a savage animal.”

What kind of transitions does the author use?

This paragraph doesn’t have a transition.

What is the subtopic thesis statement?

“Even the most passive mother can turn into a savage animal.”

What are the subtopic examples?

Laura, the single parent and her son Edward

What are the subtopic supporting details?

- 1) **Laura is frantic over her 14-year-old son waiting outside the theatre**
- 2) **Author’s concern that Laura is a “crazy person”**
- 3) **Laura wanting to smash in her window to get to her keys**

Subtopic #2:

How does Subtopic #2 begin?

“If a passive mother cannot override the temptation of a “mama bear” instinct, then neither can a poised mother.”

What kind of transitions does the author use?

Familiar (passive) to Unfamiliar (poised)

What is the subtopic thesis statement?

“If a passive mother cannot override the temptation of a “mama bear” instinct, then neither can a poised mother.”

Note: The transition and the subtopic thesis statement are one in the same; but the substance of the thesis statement is what is underlined.

What are the subtopic examples?

- 1) **Lilly and her father-in-law**
- 2) **The following descriptive details illustrate the point: petite hand, gripping handle, bulging veins, eyes crossing, frowning, and pulverizing the piece. (This explicit detail paints a picture that the audience can “see in their mind.”)**

What are the subtopic supporting details?

- 1) **Lilly, the epitome of a classy lady**
- 2) **Lilly pounding the cart**
- 3) **Lilly remembering her father-in-law giving son a drink of beer**

Subtopic #3:

How does Subtopic #3 begin?

“If poise can’t compete with the maternal instinct, neither can intellect.”

What kind of transitions does the author use?

Familiar (poise) to Unfamiliar (intellect)

What is the subtopic thesis statement?

“If poise can’t compete with the maternal instinct, neither can intellect.”

Note: The transition and the subtopic thesis statement are one in the same; but the substance of the thesis statement is what is underlined.

What are the subtopic examples?

- 12) **Samantha – quiet, thinking and diplomatic**
- 13) **Men run over Liz in the stroller**
- 14) **Samantha kicking and cursing at them**

What are the subtopic supporting details?

- 1) **The story of the football game gone awry.**
- 2) **Tripping over the stroller**
- 3) **Samantha in a rampage**
- 4) **Samantha kicking and cursing, but doesn't remember**

Conclusion:

How does the conclusion begin?

“Since I have no children yet...”

Was the thesis statement restated? How?

Not directly, but somewhat implied by the phrase, “I often wonder whether or not I would become a “mama bear” under stress.

Were the subtopics restated? How? **No**

What is the “so what” statement?

It was implied that the author had a “mama bear” instinct (despite her denial) lurking and wanting to come out as illustrated by the following passages: “...Knowing that I contemplate everything, I probably wouldn't react in such a way – although anything is possible. ...When I got to work, I called my brother at the house and begged him to please bring in my poor, pathetic little baby. I just couldn't stand the thought of him being out in the rain all day, sucking his thumb and calling for his mommy!”

Now in the space below, outline the essay by writing the thesis statement, supporting points, and the conclusion.

I believe that it is instinctive for females of most species to be very protective of their offspring; and humans are no different.

- 4) **Passive mothers can become “mama bears”**
- 5) **Poised mothers can become “mama bears”**
- 6) **Intellectual mothers can become “mama bears”**

Despite her denial, the author has the potential of becoming a “mama bear” as well

Next, reflect on this outline for a few minutes. Turn this paper over and try to rewrite from memory the main points of the essay on the back of this assignment without referring back.

Now that you have learned how to look for the main point, take a few minutes to reflect on what you learned through this exercise.