



# Writing a RANT!

## Instructions for an Opinion Essay

**Wow, so you're two assignments in and this teacher is asking you to write an essay, already? Yeeeeeesh! Try not to worry— here's some help that will get you through!**

Download your **1.3 Rant Worksheet** to have it in front of you while reading these directions. The goal of this assignment is to gently walk you through and refresh your memory on writing basic opinion essays. Many tips here can help throughout this course with other essays you will write. Save this document someplace special, next to your heart...I mean, hard drive! Right!

**Why did the topic catch my attention?** When you're asked this, it means we want to hear about the significance of your chosen topic to *you*, personally. Did something happen to you or someone you know, that relates to the topic? What happened? Is it something you've been interested in for a long time? Why? Is it a topic that you know is important and are curious about? Why do you think it's important? What are you curious about?

Here, you will tell us your initial thoughts on why this is the direction you chose. Be detailed though. *"I think it's cool,"* is not what we're looking for. We're looking for, *"I really dislike how so many artists use auto-tune nowadays—it makes me wonder what is happening to the music industry, and it also makes me wonder about people and how their musical tastes have changed."* Bear in mind too, your opinion **does not** have to be negative. We're not trying to raise trolls here, just critical thinkers.

**Investigation Chart** – This is a chance to explore your topic further with the knowledge you already possess—whether it's from personal experience, media you've already read/viewed, or the experiences of people you've met, or know. **Hint:** *Do a thorough job of this chart*, but write it in point-form, *especially* the "what have I experienced in life" part of the chart. You can come back to this part of the chart later and pull these experiences out for evidence in your essay...

(i.e. *I have a cousin who is in his twenties, who lives in an apartment and trades bit-coin online for a living so he doesn't have to leave his apartment. He orders his groceries online, he doesn't attend family functions, and he just plays WoW all day. I'm pretty sure he's a modern-day hermit, and I'm also pretty sure it qualifies as an issue where technology is creating an issue with his quality of life.*)

**"Aspects of my topic I will explore further are...."** What are the questions you still have about the topic? What are the missing pieces of the puzzle for you? What are

the answers you seek? This will help provoke deeper thinking, and it will also give you some good pointers on where to begin your research.

*(Consider: “Have other people become recluses like my cousin? I should research that. Is this a “thing” that happens now? I should find out! Spoiler alert—it is totally a [thing](#)( ← link)!)*

## Research Resources

**Media title** is the title of your piece of chosen media (put in quotation marks). **Media types** you can use are news stories, magazine articles, online articles, journal articles, etc. Keep in mind, you want to have quality sources (remember the presentation on “Finding Good Information”). The **title** of your media, is the title that author has given that piece. Make sure you record it, record the *type* of media, as well as the website you found it at (the URL).

In “valuable notes of interest”, write down the main ideas of your article and any statistics or quotations that catch your eye, and relate to or expand upon your chosen topic. If you run out of room here, add on to an additional page.

## Starting to Plan & Organize

As you get into the rough planning stages, right before you start putting together an outline, you have to make sure that you organize your information, **and** ensure you have enough information and all the right pieces necessary to put together your essay.

What are you going to need right away? You’ll need a **main idea/thesis**, for sure, and you’ll need **paragraph topics / body paragraph topics**.

### Thesis / Main Idea

**Remember**, your thesis is a general idea. When you introduce your main idea/thesis in an opinion essay, it is going to be your statement of opinion. Your main idea/thesis *specifically* tells your reader what you plan to talk about (your main idea) and sometimes, *how* you plan to talk about it (if you were writing about a novel you would mention the novel title, or an element of the novel you were using in your exploration).

For an opinion essay, a main idea/thesis might look like this: ***I believe that TV can have a negative influence on adolescents in a variety of ways. ← I am stating my full opinion on a topic here (the topic being “the influence of TV”).***

*Okay, so that’s cool. Clearly I have a good main idea, but uhhh...what about body paragraph topics/ideas? What am I actually writing the essay on? I will have to write 3 more paragraphs...*



Put your main idea/thesis into the **limelight** on a scrap piece of paper and look at the key words, either in your written opinion, or, in the essay prompt/topic itself.

*In this case, it is fairly straightforward. I said there were a variety of ways that TV was a bad influence. What are all the “ways” it can be a bad influence?”*

*-Hmm. Profanity, for sure.*

*-Violence*

***-Unhealthy amounts of screen time (3?)***

*-Mature sexual content*

*-Drug and alcohol use*

***-Encouraging risky lifestyle choices (2?)***

***-Ads encouraging consumerism/commercials (buy, buy, buy!) (1?)***

There are so many ways! You can't talk about them all though, or else your essay will be *super long*. We don't want that (unless you're totally fascinated, then we'll allow it, because we're nerds). **Choose three of your brainstormed ideas.** This means you'll have one idea, per body paragraph, to discuss in depth.

*(i.e.) Studies have **shown that advertising has a rather insidious effect on teenagers**. Nowadays, teenagers are specifically targeted by ads because they have much more disposable income than previous generations of teens did. As a result of this constant bombardment, advertising also “acts as a kind of ‘super peer’ in guiding them [teenagers] toward what's cool and what's acceptable.” Now, instead of viewing an ad to see what's out there, teenagers view ads and take these as hints towards greater peer acceptance. It's a very deliberate advertisement trap, as it gives teens the wrong idea about being a consumer (or about why we as consumers ‘consume’).*

**Curious?** <https://bit.ly/2g28GYu>

Consider your research sources too—Choose topics that accommodate the information you've found, or find interesting (**or**, that your found information will support the discussion of). It's important to make your ideas and evidence jive and relate, as everything has to flow and be connected (or your reader is going to daydream instead of pay attention).

**Pro Tip:** When you write an essay, a good tip about how to write it and why you're writing it, is to imagine you are trying to teach or inform someone younger, with your words. This way of thinking means you need to watch the words you use, how direct and engaging you are with your writing, and it also means you have an additional goal or purpose to what you're doing.

Could someone younger than you learn something valuable from what you've written, in the way you've written it? Thinking about this idea may be helpful to ensure you are communicating clearly and effectively.

## Rant Organizer / Mind Map

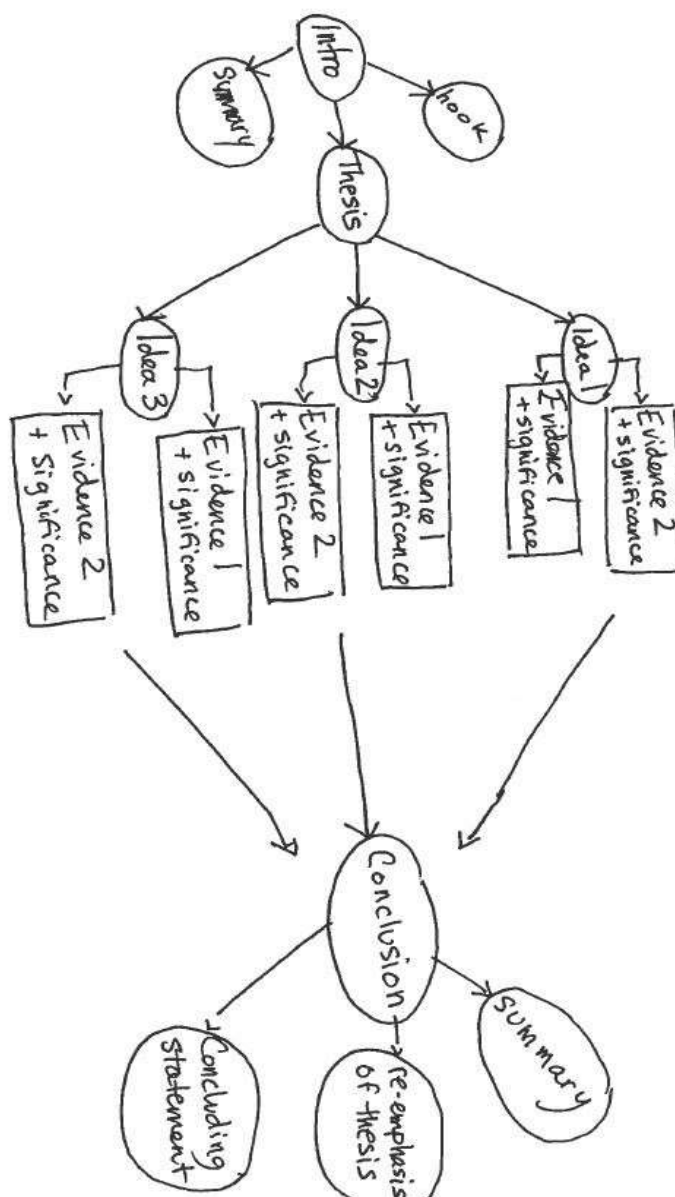
Remember, there is an example of what these could look like in the “student examples” tab. You can choose from a linear format of an organizer, or something more abstract, like a mind map.

The basic ingredients of your organizer (**either type**) should cover the following information in point form:

### Linear

1. Intro
  - a. Hook
  - b. Summary of ideas
  - c. Thesis/main idea
2. Body paragraph 1 (idea)
  - a. Evidence and explanation
  - b. Evidence and explanation
  - c. Concluding statement
3. Body paragraph 2 (idea)
  - a. Evidence and explanation
  - b. Evidence and explanation
  - c. Concluding statement
4. Body paragraph 3 (idea)
  - a. Evidence and explanation
  - b. Evidence and explanation
  - c. Concluding statement
5. Conclusion
  - a. Summary of ideas
  - b. Re-emphasis of thesis/main idea
  - c. Concluding statement

### Abstract



## 1. Introduction

An introduction starts your conversation. We actually do this when we talk to each other, if you pay attention. We have our hook: “Hey man, how’s it going?” This “grabs” the attention of our audience (i.e. our friend), before we launch into whatever it is we want to talk about: “I watched that movie, *The Meg*, last night—it was incredible.”

*We get the attention of a listener/viewer/reader, then we tell them the subject we potentially want to talk about at length. At first, we introduce the subject generally, and in conversation, if our friend is a good listener, maybe we’ll get to ramble on about it in more detail. We would not just randomly walk up to our friends and just start talking to them about a subject at length, with zero preparation (with zero time given to them to anticipate what is coming).*

A similar idea applies to writing an introduction—we grab our reader’s attention, we prepare them with what they need to know to continue reading, then we tell them the subject of what we want to discuss in detail, further along (in your body paragraphs). If applicable, we also tell them *how* we’ll talk about that subject (i.e. “...using the book *Into the Wild*”).

- a. **Hook-** Grab your reader’s attention! Is there a statement, fact or definition that would be interesting for them to know? Remember the goal with your hook is to draw your reader in to pay attention to what you want to talk about.

*It is a great spot to also fill your reader in on any information they might need to know, in order to better understand your essay (definitions, principles, theories, etc.). Your intro prepares your reader to learn and understand the knowledge you are about to drop on their unsuspecting faces.*

(i.e.) **Definition** hook: *The word “bias” is defined roughly as a viewpoint or perspective that a person or organization has that is unfairly balanced. When discussing bias...*

**Quotation** hook: *In the original Die Hard, Bruce Willis once said, “now I know what a TV dinner feels like,” in light of being involved in a conflict....*

**Anecdote** hook: *When I was a kid, I was only afraid of the dark. Now that I’m older, I find that my fears have changed, due to the life experiences I have had since then. Experiences in life can mold us in many ways....*

- b. **Summary of ideas**- What are the ideas you are going to discuss? Identify **3**.

*(i.e.) There are three ways that advertising can negatively influence teens, such as, the advertising they are exposed to **(1)**, the amount of screen time they experience while viewing TV **(2)**, as well as the influence of content in terms of viewing risky behaviours of characters or people **(3)**.*

- c. **Main Idea/thesis** – What is the guiding idea of your essay? Remember, here, it will specifically be your statement of opinion on your topic.

*(i.e.) I believe that TV can have a negative influence on adolescents in a variety of ways.*

## 2. Body Paragraph 1

- a. **Topic idea** – Remember the summary of ideas you covered in your intro? Bring in the first idea you spoke about and explain why it is relevant to your **main idea/thesis**.
- Give a piece of evidence from one of the articles you read while researching your topic. *Explain the significance of this evidence.\**
  - Give a piece of evidence from your personal experience (or the experiences of someone you know). *Explain the significance of this evidence.*
- b. **Concluding sentence(s)**—Wrap up your discussion about this particular idea. Why is it so important to consider this, in light of your thesis/main idea? How does it relate?

*(i.e.) A Body Paragraph:*

*The amount of screen time teens have when watching TV, or using other devices, can influence them in many ways **(topic)**. Screen time has recently gained attention regarding health and well-being because of the effects it can have on the human body **(explanation of relevance)**. One study has shown that teenagers who are exposed to over 6 hours of screen time on a daily basis (TV and other devices, such as cell phones, combined) “are ten times less likely to achieve proper sleep patterns at night, and likely not to obtain a full 8-10 hours of recommended sleep*



**(evidence 1).**” Teenagers are at an age where their brains are going crazy with growth—growth that is only enabled through healthy sleep patterns **(explanation 1)**. The study goes on to say, “teenagers who obtain less than 6 hours of sleep a night are more likely to experience issues with learning, issues with mental health, and mental illness-like symptoms or behaviours **(evidence 2)**.” **This is important because** the length of time that kids are exposed to the light of these devices, as well as the type of light they emit (blue light), can prevent adequate sleep, as the body’s natural circadian rhythms are disrupted **(explanation 2)**. This kind of damage can be prevented if kids learn more information about limiting screen viewing or other strategies, such as orange light filters (some phones have this built in). The exposure that teens have to screens has potentially serious physical consequences, just from time spent on them alone **(concluding sentence)** ...

*\*When you explain the significance of a piece of evidence, you are explaining why you chose to highlight this particular stat, quotation or fact. How is it relevant to what you are talking about?*

### 3. Body Paragraph 2

- a. **Topic idea** – Remember the summary of ideas you covered in your intro? Bring in the second idea you spoke about and explain why it is relevant to your **main idea/thesis**.
  - i. Give a piece of evidence from one of the articles you read while researching your topic. *Explain the significance of this evidence.*
  - ii. Give a piece of evidence from your personal experience (or the experiences of someone you know). *Explain the significance of this evidence.*
- b. **Concluding sentence(s)**— Wrap up your discussion about this particular idea. Why is it so important to consider this, in light of your thesis/main idea? How does it relate?



#### 4. Body Paragraph 3

- a. **Topic idea** – Remember the summary of ideas you covered in your intro? Bring in the third idea you spoke about and explain why it is relevant to your **main idea/thesis**.
  - i. Give a piece of evidence from one of the articles you read while researching your topic. *Explain the significance of this evidence.*
  - ii. Give a piece of evidence from your personal experience (or the experiences of someone you know). *Explain the significance of this evidence.*
- b. **Concluding sentence**—Wrap up your discussion about this particular idea. Why is it so important to consider this, in light of your thesis/main idea? How does it relate?

#### 5. Conclusion

*Remember that your conclusion draws your conversation to a close. You are wrapping up your focused discussion and zeroing in on why this information is so important for your reader to know and understand.*

- a. **Summarize your main ideas**—what are all the concepts you covered in relation to your **main idea/thesis**? (Hint: the topics you explored in each of your body paragraphs). Highlight any key information from each, if you wish.

*(i.e.) We have observed that TV advertising negatively influences teens, especially in terms of self-perception (1), as well as learning that screen time with TV/devices can be detrimental to physical and mental wellbeing (2). The influence of media content can be significant, if teenagers don't know how to understand and filter the content they view (3).*
- b. **Re-emphasize your main idea/thesis.** **Note**, re-emphasize **does not mean** “repeat” your main idea/thesis. When you re-emphasize your main idea/thesis, you are revealing to your reader **why** (in light of your discussion in your three body paragraphs) **your thesis is important to consider**. How does it relate to the world around us?

*(i.e.) **Thesis:** I believe that TV can have a negative influence on adolescents in a variety of ways.*

**Re-emphasized thesis:** *If a teenager is not aware of the physical implications or critical thinking required for viewing TV safely, their mental and physical state may be at risk.*

\*Notice how this is more specific than your thesis and takes your discussed ideas (body paragraph ideas) into consideration. Note as well, this is a statement that could be imparted to **anyone** to think about or share with others.

- c. **Closing statement-** This is closely related to your re-emphasized thesis. What is an idea or statement that your reader could immediately pull from your discussion and apply to the world around them?

*Another way to think about this, is “what do I want my reader to walk away remembering as the key message of this essay?”*

Make sure it's not moralistic, make sure it's not preachy, and make sure *it* is thought-provoking and relevant to anyone who reads it. **You can use a quotation here**, but make sure the connection is explained or highly relevant/obvious to your reader.

*(i.e.) In the words of John Lennon, “if everyone demanded peace instead of another television set, then there'd be peace.” ← Note the lead in here (In the words...). This is important. Quotations in concluding statements must always be attributed like this. Don't just dump a quotation and run!*

**Pro Tip:** Remember to return back to this help-sheet to help you write out your essay. Using this structure is a great way to keep organized and focused for most types of essays you will write in grade 11 and 12.

*Introductions and conclusions are usually going to be structured the same way as they are explained here. As well, you will always need to integrate evidence into essays, and you will always need to explain the significance of that evidence. Lastly—always edit your work! Read it out loud to yourself, find a peer to look it over, use Grammar.ly, or read it backwards, line-by-line. Do not just rely on spell-check to find all the errors.*