

Understanding the Personal Response Process

Everyone has an opinion. How you present and support that opinion determines how convincing your argument is to your audience.

You can organize supporting evidence in a Personal Response assignment in one of two formats: integrated evidence or segregated evidence.

- **Integrated** means that you combine support from both text and personal experience **in each body paragraph** to reinforce the idea.

Sample Body Paragraph Outline or Pattern:

- Topic sentence
 - > **Evidence #1:** specific details from **text**
 - > **Evidence #2:** specific details from **personal experience** or observation
- Transition sentence

- **Segregated** means that you separate support from text and personal experience in different paragraphs:
 - **text** evidence goes in **one body paragraph**
 - **personal experience** evidence goes in a **different body paragraph**

Sample Body Paragraph Outline or Pattern:

Body Paragraph for **Evidence # 1 (text)**

- Topic sentences for three ideas in your thesis statement
 - > specific details from text
(Initial belief: what does the character believe at first)
 - > specific details from text
(Problem: how is that belief or viewpoint tested?)
 - > specific details from text
(Decision & Result: what does the character decide and what are the effects of the decision?)

Body Paragraph for **Evidence # 2 (personal experience)**

- Transition sentence to personal experience
 - > specific details from text
(Initial belief: what did you believe at first)
 - > specific details from text
(Problem: how is that belief tested?)
 - > specific details from text
(Decision & Result: what did you decide and what were the effects of your decision?)
- Transition sentence: summarize ideas in paragraphs

The following samples are provided:

- > a general personal response outline: *format 1 - integrated evidence*
- > a general personal response outline: *format 2 - segregated evidence*
- > personal response assignment **question**
- > student outline using *integrated* organization of evidence
- > student outline using *segregated* organization of evidence
- > polished student personal response

GENERAL Personal Response Outline: *FORMAT 1 - INTEGRATED EVIDENCE*

Introductory Paragraph

- General statement about life
- Background information and key words from the topic
- Brief mention that topic applies to your chosen text and personal experience
- Thesis statement (one or two sentences; your answer to the question)

Body Paragraph 1

- Topic sentence: first idea in your thesis statement
 - > Evidence #1: specific details from *text*
explanation of relevance of idea and evidence to the thesis
 - > Evidence #2: specific details from *personal experience* or observation
explanation of relevance of idea and evidence to the thesis
- Transition sentence: summarize idea in this paragraph and mention topic of next paragraph

Body Paragraph 2

- Topic sentence: second idea in your thesis statement
 - > Evidence #1: specific details from *text*
explanation of relevance of idea and evidence to the thesis
 - > Evidence #2: specific details from *personal experience* or observation
explanation of relevance of idea and evidence to the thesis
- Transition sentence: summarize idea in this paragraph and mention topic of next paragraph

Body Paragraph 3

- Topic sentence: third idea in your thesis statement
 - > Evidence #1: specific details from *text*
explanation of relevance of idea and evidence to the thesis
 - > Evidence #2: specific details from *personal experience* or observation
explanation of relevance of idea and evidence to the thesis
- Transition sentence: summarize idea in this paragraph

Concluding Paragraph

- Re-state your thesis in different words
- Summarize main ideas in body paragraphs
- Conclude with statement that topic applied to your chosen text and personal experience
- Comment on the significance of your thesis to society

GENERAL Personal Response Outline: *FORMAT 2 - SEGREGATED EVIDENCE*

Introductory Paragraph

- General statement about life
- Background information and key words from the topic
- Brief mention that topic applies to your chosen text and personal experience
- Thesis statement (one or two sentences; your answer to the question)

Body Paragraph for Evidence # 1 (text)

- Topic sentences for three ideas in your thesis statement
 - > specific details from text
(Initial belief: what does the character believe at first)
 - > specific details from text
(Problem: how is that belief or viewpoint tested?)
 - > specific details from text
(Decision & Result: what does the character decide and what are the effects of the decision?)

Body Paragraph for Evidence # 2 (personal experience)

- Transition sentence to personal experience
 - > specific details from text
(Initial belief: what did you believe at first)
 - > specific details from text
(Problem: how is that belief tested?)
 - > specific details from text
(Decision & Result: what did you decide and what were the effects of your decision?)
- Transition sentence: summarize ideas in paragraphs

Concluding Paragraph

- Re-state your thesis in different words
- Summarize main ideas in body paragraphs
- Conclude with statement that the topic applied to your chosen text and personal experience
- Comment on the significance of your thesis to society

SAMPLE PERSONAL RESPONSE QUESTION:

How do attitudes and behaviours determine the success of relationships with others?

SAMPLE Student Outline: **Format 1 - Integrated Evidence**

Introductory Paragraph

- General statement about life
 - > *People get to know others by their behaviour, society's standard for choosing friends.*
- Background information and key words from the topic
 - > Key words: *attitudes, behaviours, success, relationships*
 - > *When happy and confident, people are accepting = new friends + relationship*
 - > *When frustrated and angry, people criticize = drive others away*
- Brief mention that topic applies to your chosen text and personal experience
 - > *Bryan's attitude in youth affected his judgement in "Arctic Plums" (Between the Lines, p. 235).*
 - > *My job at the grocery store taught me about attitudes and relationships.*
- Thesis statement :
 - > *Lasting relationships depend on the extent to which people are willing to control their behaviours and adjust their attitudes.*

Body Paragraph 1

- Topic sentence:
 - > *Most relationships are casual; just courtesy and politeness required*
- > Evidence from **"Arctic Plums"**
 - > *Brian delivered Gladys' paper*
 - > *never thought of Gladys as a friend*
- > Evidence from **personal experience** or observation
 - > *I'm polite to customers*
 - > *rarely have conversations*
- Transition sentence:
 - > *Politeness promotes pleasant environments, but as relationships become more complex, more control is required to fulfill expectations.*

Body Paragraph 2

- Topic sentence: second idea in your thesis statement
 - > *People learn early to control their attitudes and actions.*
- > Evidence from **"Arctic Plums"**
 - > *Brian afraid of being caught raiding garden*
 - > *didn't eat fruit because of rumours and myths*
- > Evidence from **personal experience** or observation
 - > *training includes expected employee behaviour*
 - > *impolite, inefficient workers fired*
- Transition sentence:
 - > *Controlling attitudes and actions is difficult but necessary for acceptance.*

Body Paragraph 3

- Topic sentence: third idea in your thesis statement
 - > *By adjusting attitudes and controlling behaviours people may promote cooperation and trust.*

- > Evidence from **“Arctic Plums”**
 - > *Brian’s friend appreciated Gladys because he took time to get to know her*
 - > *Brian changed his opinion after learning more about Gladys*
- > Evidence from **personal experience** or observation
 - > *got to know customer because of his interest in skateboarding*
 - > *entered competitions with his encouragement*
 - > *now, a best friend*
- Transition sentence:
 - > *By trusting each other, people share interests and strengthen relationships.*

Concluding Paragraph

- Re-state your thesis in different words
 - > *When people ignore courtesies, relationships weaken.*
- Summarize main ideas in body paragraphs
 - > *Choosing to violate society’s expectations may have serious consequences, including rejection and loneliness.*
 - > *Most people benefit from strong relationships.*
- > Concluding statement about topic in **“Arctic Plums”** and **personal experience**
 - > *Brian realized too late that by adjusting his attitude, he could have helped Gladys and appreciated her point of view.*
 - > *I benefited by getting to know a customer and treating him as more than a weekly pay cheque.*
- Comment on the significance of your thesis to society
 - > *Most people willingly adjust their attitudes and behaviours to befriend those they respect and are generally happier because of such a change.*

SAMPLE Student Outline: **Format 2 - Segregated Evidence**

Introductory Paragraph

- General statement about life
 - > *People get to know others by their behaviour, society's standard for choosing friends.*
- Background information and key words from the topic
 - > Key words: *attitudes, behaviours, success, relationships*
 - > *When happy and confident, people are accepting = new friends + relationship*
 - > *When frustrated and angry, people criticize = drive others away*
- Brief mention that topic applies to your chosen text and personal experience
 - > *Bryan's attitude in youth affected his judgement in "Arctic Plums" (Between the Lines, p. 235).*
 - > *My job at the grocery store taught me about attitudes and relationships.*
- Thesis statement :
 - > *Lasting relationships depend on the extent to which people are willing to control their behaviours and adjust their attitudes.*

Body Paragraph for Evidence # 1 ("**Arctic Plums**")

- Topic sentences:
 - > *Most relationships are casual; just courtesy and politeness; people learn early to control their attitudes and actions; adjusting attitudes and behaviour may promote cooperation and trust*
- Specific details from text
 - > *Brian delivered Gladys' paper*
 - > *never thought of Gladys as a friend*
 - > *Brian afraid of being caught raiding garden*
 - > *didn't eat fruit because of rumours and myths*
 - > *Brian's friend appreciated Gladys because he took time to get to know her*
 - > *Brian changed his opinion after learning more about Gladys*

Body Paragraph for Evidence # 2 (**personal experience**)

- Transition sentence
 - > *Like Brian, I serve customers politely but rarely speak to them.*
- Specific details from personal experience
 - > *I'm polite to customers*
 - > *rarely have conversations*
 - > *training includes expected employee behaviour*
 - > *impolite, inefficient workers fired*
 - > *got to know customer because of his interest in skateboarding*
 - > *entered competitions with his encouragement*
 - > *now, a best friend*
- Transition sentence: summarize ideas in paragraphs
 - > *If people want to encourage relationships, they have to change their attitude from disinterest to genuine curiosity. Showing an interest in others can lead to an appreciation of their uniqueness and a greater understanding of people in general.*

Concluding Paragraph

- Re-state your thesis in different words
 - > *When we ignore courtesies, relationships weaken.*
- Summarize main ideas in body paragraphs
 - > *Choosing to violate society's expectations may have serious consequences, including rejection and loneliness.*
 - > *Most people benefit from strong relationships.*
- Concluding statement about topic in "Arctic Plums" and personal experience
 - > *Brian realized too late that by adjusting his attitude, he could have helped Gladys and appreciated her point of view.*
 - > *I benefited by getting to know a customer and treating him as more than a weekly pay cheque.*
- Comment on the significance of your thesis to society
 - > *Most people willingly adjust their attitudes and behaviour to befriend those they respect and are generally happier because of such a change.*

Polished Student Personal Response

Robot or Human?

People get to know others by their behaviour. Happy, confident individuals are much more outgoing and accepting of others and their uniqueness. Frustrated, angry people usually focus on differences and criticize others, driving away potential friends. In "Arctic Plums", Bryan's attitude in youth affected his judgement of his neighbour. My job at a grocery store taught me about attitudes and relationships. Although many relationships are casual, lasting relationships depend on how willing people are to control their behaviour and adjust their attitudes.

Most relationships are casual, only requiring individuals to behave with common courtesy and politeness. In "Arctic Plums", the relationship between Brian and Gladys was limited to a slight interaction when he delivered her paper. The only time they ever spoke was when he collected payment. He never thought of her as a friend. Like Brian, I serve customers politely at the grocery store but rarely have conversations with them. Robot-like, I tell them where products are located. I say "Hello", "How are you?", "Have a nice day" and don't even listen for a reply. At school, I act completely different, mixing with others and discussing techniques with other skateboarders. Politeness promotes pleasant, though artificial environments. If people want to encourage relationships, they have to change their attitude from disinterest to genuine curiosity.

Because society demands certain behaviours in specific situations, people learn early to control their attitudes and actions. Brian raided Gladys' garden so his friends would accept him, but he was afraid of being caught because she knew him. Because of rumours and myths about Gladys' garden, the children would not eat the fruit, causing Brian to feel even more guilt for his act of vandalism. In my workplace, training includes expected employee behaviour. Supervisors fire those who are impolite, inefficient, or unhelpful to customers. If employees want to keep the job, they are forced to deal politely with all customers, even those with complaints. Controlling attitudes and behaviour is difficult but necessary for acceptance in society.

Adjusting attitudes and behaviour may promote cooperation and trust with those regarded as significant, leading to lasting relationships. After he learned more about Gladys, Brian changed his opinion of her. He accepted the idea that her' fruit was not poisonous and that she was not "odd". His misjudgement prevented him from getting to know her and understanding her point of view. In my experience, I took an interest in a customer carrying a skateboard. We agreed to meet at the park after school, where he taught me new techniques. I was always afraid to enter competitions, but with his encouragement, I did and won. Now, I consider him a best friend. Showing an interest in others can lead to an appreciation of their uniqueness and a greater understanding of people in general.

Whether casual or work-related, all relationships demand certain behaviours so that society runs smoothly. When people dismiss others as unimportant, they prevent themselves from potential opportunities that may result from interacting with fascinating individuals. Brian had to live with shame and personal disappointment for treating a nice lady with disrespect; I undoubtedly lost opportunities to meet interesting people by treating customers as invisible. Many people willingly adjust their attitudes and behaviours to befriend people they respect and are generally happier for such a change.