

MAIN IDEA

1 The story of Oedipus the King, a play written by Sophocles is really amazing. This play has a lot of foreshadowing in it. Here's what happens, Oedipus is king and his city is suffering from a truly nasty plague. People are suffering and dying, so Creon goes and asks Apollo how Oedipus can save the city. Apollo says they have to find and punish the person who killed the last king. Then Oedipus send for an old man that everybody thinks is a profit. This profit tells Oedipus that he's the murderer—he says that Oedipus killed King Laius.

2

- 1** The opening sentence does not provide a thesis statement or main idea. The details provided in the paragraph do not introduce any main idea.
- 2** The lack of a main idea results in a lapse into unfocused summary, instead of purposeful elaboration.

SUPPORTING DETAILS

Sophocles gives lots of clues to show that Oedipus must be the real killer. All this is bad but it actually gets worse. It turns out that the guy Oedipus killed was not only the king of Thebes—the place Oedipus is now king of. The guy was also the father of Oedipus. Could anything be worse than killing your own father? But that isn't all. After Laius died, after Oedipus killed him, he married his widow Jocasta. During the play Oedipus learns that Jocasta is actually his mother.

- 1 The supporting details are sparse and without purpose. They are mere plot summary and unrelated to any main idea.

ORGANIZATION

1 ...When Oedipus was young, Apollo told him that he would kill his father and marry his mother. This seemed so horrible that Oedipus ran away from his home city, and the people he thought were his parents. It sounded like a good plan for escaping his fate, right? But it didn't work. The people he stayed away from weren't his natural parents. They just adopted him when he was a baby when his real parents got rid of him, because they heard he would kill them. But you can't escape your fate in this play—that seems to be the main idea. Oedipus sure couldn't escape his.

2

- 1** There is no logical development from beginning to end. The topic sentence of this paragraph has no relation to the opening paragraph.
- 2** The lack of a solid topic sentence results in poor organization of the paragraph. Its purpose is unclear.

COHERENCE

1 As I said, everybody is looking for the murderer because the god Apollo says the awful plague will continue in the city which is Thebes, until the killer is hunted down and either killed or sent away from the city. So as time goes on Oedipus does realize that he did commit the murder. Sophocles gives lots of clues to show that Oedipus must be the real killer.

2

- 1** No effective relationships between causes and effects are clearly established in the composition.
- 2** “So” is a misleading transition. The next sentence continues the plot summary.

MAIN IDEA

1 Sophocles does a great deal of foreshadowing in his play *Oedipus the King*. The use of this literary device creates suspense and also helps prepare the reader for what is to come. **2**

- 1** The opening paragraph is sparse; there is not enough detail leading to the main idea.
- 2** The main idea is not sufficiently introduced or well-defined.

SUPPORTING DETAILS

One instance of foreshadowing occurs when Creon, brother-in-law of King Oedipus, returns to the plague-stricken city of Thebes with a message from Apollo. The message is that the plague will continue until a long-ago murder is avenged through the killing or the banishment of the murderer. The person who was murdered was Laius, who was king of Thebes just before Oedipus. Oedipus declares that the guilty person must be found and banished. At the conclusion of the play, the murderer has been discovered and is about to be taken from the city. This occurs just as it was foreshadowed. The use of foreshadowing prepares the reader for this event. This instance of foreshadowing also creates suspense—the reader wonders who the murderer might be, and whether that person will be found and punished.

- 1 The lack of a main idea has reduced the details to plot summary.
- 2 The writer attempts to connect the plot details to the main idea.

ORGANIZATION

... But as Tiresias foreshadowed at the beginning of the play, Oedipus cannot escape his fate. This seems to be the main theme of the play. This theme is foreshadowed at the start of the play, along with the fact that Oedipus is the murderer who must be discovered and either killed or banished from Thebes.

1 As you can see, foreshadowing is a very important literary technique in Oedipus the King. Without foreshadowing, the play would be much less suspenseful. **2**

- 1** The beginning of this conclusion is ineffective and unrelated to the preceding line of thought.
- 2** The conclusion reached in the final sentence is sparse, and it barely addresses the ideas developed in the essay.

COHERENCE

1 Who is the murderer? Sophocles uses foreshadowing to suggest who it might be, but the reader has to keep reading to find out if this person is the murderer or not. This foreshadowing occurs when Oedipus sends for the blind prophet Tiresias. This prophet is an old man who, against his will, reveals that Oedipus himself is the one who murdered Laius. Oedipus reacts to the accusations with rage and scorn. He even makes fun of Tiresias's blindness and threatens him. Thus, Oedipus can sometimes be cruel and a bully—he isn't always a wise and caring ruler. This example of foreshadowing heightens the dramatic tension of the work. **2**

- 1** An answer to the initial question would make the paragraph more coherent.
- 2** This sentence has a misleading transition and is irrelevant in the paragraph. The sentence makes the writing seem incoherent.

MAIN IDEA

1 Foreshadowing is an important technique that can help unify a literary work. In the Greek drama *Oedipus the King*, Sophocles uses foreshadowing to hint at coming events. The early instances of foreshadowing help determine the theme and the structure of the plot. Other instances of foreshadowing throughout the play help to build suspense and prepare the reader for events to come. **2**

- 1** The writer clearly introduces the topic and states the main idea of the essay.
- 2** The opening paragraph is well-stated and elaborates upon the main idea.

2

SUPPORTING DETAILS

1 Another example of foreshadowing occurs when Oedipus summons the blind prophet Tiresias and forces him to identify the murderer of Laius: it is Oedipus himself. Oedipus is shocked and enraged by Tiresias's accusation, and he threatens and reviles the old man. Tiresias insists that he is telling the truth, however, and warns Oedipus that soon he will learn the horrifying facts about his marriage. The entire play then becomes a sort of ancient detective story, in which Oedipus examines witnesses and follows clues to determine the truth.

- 1** The purpose of the elaboration is explained, and it clearly supports the main idea.
- 2** The writer compares the plot to a detective story. This comparison is an effective explanatory detail.

ORGANIZATION

1 Thus, foreshadowing is critical in this Greek drama. It helps to unify the work and heightens its dramatic tension. **2** Foreshadowing also provides a plot line, prepares the reader for future events, and highlights the play's central theme.

- 1** The beginning of the paragraph is focused and refers back to the main idea in a logical way.
- 2** The conclusion unifies the essay.

COHERENCE

1 In addition to advancing and unifying the plot, foreshadowing highlights the central theme of the play: the impossibility of avoiding one's fate. This theme is foreshadowed early in the play, when Tiresias tells Oedipus that he cannot escape his fate. As the play progresses, the reader learns about events that prove Tiresias is correct.

2

- 1** This transitional phrase purposefully connects the paragraph to the previous paragraph.
- 2** The writer logically traces incidents in the play to support the main idea.

MAIN IDEA

1 Why is it that in a presidential election, only slightly more than half of all eligible voters in the United States actually go to the polls on election day? This record of poor turnout does not indicate that large numbers of Americans do not support their system of government; in fact, public opinion surveys indicate that the opposite is true. In my opinion, many Americans do not vote because they believe their vote is unimportant. **2**

- 1** The writer introduces the topic of the essay and the main idea by asking a provocative question.
- 2** The writer states the main idea by offering a clear argument.

SUPPORTING DETAILS

... the prevailing idea being that a person who could not hold a marriage together could not hold a nation together. Although most Americans no longer hold such views, political campaigns, and the media who cover them, are still paying too much attention to private rather than public lives. Political advertisements that contain soft music, scenes of domestic bliss, and homespun slogans, are designed to enhance a candidate's image as someone who is "just like us." However, most voters know that many candidates backgrounds do not match these images. Therefore, many people become discouraged about getting any real information on real issues. What difference does it make if a candidate has cute children or wears flannel shirts?

- 1 The response provides specific, relevant details to support ideas.
- 2 The writer provides a visual image of political advertising.

ORGANIZATION

In my opinion, many Americans do not vote because they believe their vote is unimportant.

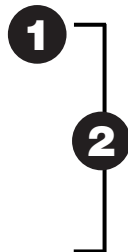
Two causes seem the most likely reasons for voter apathy: (1) many people feel overwhelmed by big, impersonal government, and (2) many have become cynical about personality-focused, rather than issue-focused, politics.

1

- 1 By stating the two supporting reasons at the end of the first paragraph, the writer introduces a clear organizational pattern for the entire essay.

COHERENCE

They prefer to remain silent rather than speak and be ignored. In addition, the complexity of government itself and of its electoral system discourages people from understanding the difference their votes might make, especially at a national level. Small wonder, then, that these people see no purpose in casting their ballots.



- 1** The writer uses transitions that move smoothly, illustrating a previous argument fully.
- 2** The writer uses focused and clearly stated sentences that connect the details to the main idea.

MAIN IDEA

Serving as a class officer is a one-person task; however, getting elected takes some help. I learned that lesson over the course of two election campaigns—the first one was disastrous, but the second was much more successful.

1

- 1 The writer clearly states the main idea of the essay. The main idea relates directly to the prompt.

SUPPORTING DETAILS

The night before the sign-up deadline, my older sister, Gabriela, came into my room.

“I didn’t see your name on the tenth-grade slate,” she said.

“No, you certainly did not,” I responded.

“You’re running, though,” she announced cheerily.

“I am not. One humiliating defeat is enough.”

“Yes, you are. I signed you up.”

1

- 1 The writer incorporates an interesting narrative to develop and support the main idea. The details of the dialogue sufficiently explain its purpose.

ORGANIZATION

You've probably guessed by now that I won the election. What did I learn from this experience? I learned that although we must take individual responsibility for reaching our goals, we sometimes need the help of others. I am working hard to be a great class treasurer. I know, however, that I never could have won the election without the help of my sister, who unselfishly devoted her time and her talents to helping me reach my goal.

- 1 In the final paragraph, the writer logically summarizes the main points of the essay.
- 2 The final sentence refers to the introduction and brings the essay to a satisfying close.

COHERENCE

1 The next thing I knew, Gabriela was sitting at the computer, creating a snappy design for a campaign flyer. When she was finished with the flyer, she started to design a campaign button. Luckily, Dad had given her a whole box of buttons left over from a convention. Here was her plan: she would create the button design on the computer, and then print out the design on large adhesive labels. Finally, we'd cut out the designs and stick them onto the buttons. Just like that, I would have my own custom campaign buttons!

2

- 1** The writer uses a clear sequence of events to illustrate the action in the narrative.
- 2** The writer uses smooth transitional words to construct a coherent narrative and explain its purpose.

MAIN IDEA

1 Safe roads are everyone's concern, and I doubt that anyone would oppose reasonable measures to enhance traffic safety. Thus, the motivation behind Bill 3479 is admirable: to keep young offending drivers off the roads after dark and to ensure that an adult driver accompanies them during daylight hours. However, as a young driver, I must urge you to vote against this bill for two reasons. First, the bill prejudicially targets one portion of the population for unusually harsh punishment. Second, the bill will make it difficult or even impossible for many students to hold part-time jobs and participate in extracurricular activities. **2**

- 1** The writer effectively introduces the topic of the essay.
- 2** The writer clearly states a position on the issue and introduces support for this position.

SUPPORTING DETAILS

Some people will argue that special rules and restrictions should apply to younger drivers, since they lack the experience and judgment of older drivers. But how will younger drivers ever gain the experience and judgment they need if they aren't allowed to drive by themselves? If Mom or Dad is always in the car, playing the role of "back-seat-driver," how will a young person ever learn to function independently out on the road? Laws already exist to restrict, suspend, or revoke the license of any driver who is truly reckless or a threat to public safety, regardless of his or her age. Let's enforce the laws that already exist in the state. Let's not start passing new laws that discriminate against drivers under the age of eighteen—such laws are simply not fair.

- 1 The writer asks two rhetorical questions to support the main idea.
- 2 The writer addresses the audience's concerns and effectively argues that another solution is preferable.

ORGANIZATION

The holder of a restricted license would be allowed to drive only when accompanied by an adult licensed driver. Furthermore, the proposed bill states a young person with a restricted license cannot drive at all after sundown. This bill clearly **1** discriminates against the youngest drivers; don't licensed drivers over the age of eighteen also commit moving violations? Yet no one is suggesting that they be issued restricted licenses. There is no evidence to indicate that speeding or running a red light presents a greater danger to public safety when the driver is under the age of eighteen. People can be safe drivers or reckless ones, regardless of their age; they don't automatically become better drivers once they reach the age of eighteen. Therefore, the same rules should apply to drivers of all ages. **2**

- 1** The writer introduces and then develops the primary objection to Bill 347.9.
- 2** The essay logically develops a focused argument.

COHERENCE

Many parents are not available to drive students to and from work; thus, **1**
anyone with a restricted license cannot hold a job, unless he or she can walk to work, get a
ride, or use public transportation. In situations in which these options do not exist, or are
not considered safe, many students will be forced to quit their jobs. Similar problems arise
when students are unable to drive to and from extracurricular activities, such as music **2**
lessons, sports team practices, and games.

- 1** The transition “thus” points out the cause and effect relationship between the two parts of the sentence. It shows how the ideas in each part are related.
- 2** The writer uses repetition to argue that the restrictions would cause multiple, unnecessary difficulties.