Sample Narratio Paragraphs

**Topic: Humor in the classroom**

Now, humor in the realm of education is not a new idea, it has pretty much existed for as long as education itself; the Greeks used it, and so did Jesus. Laughter and humor are a part of being human, no matter the time period. But there was a time in history—I’m specifically talking about American history—where humor was taboo in schooling. Professors Victoria Smith and Amy Wortley of Grand Canyon University say that teachers in the early to mid-20th century were expected to be serious and treat their material as no laughing matter (18). Think of the old fashioned schoolhouse where all the students would be sitting in rows facing a teacher, who would, more often than not, be wielding a switch to deal out punishments to misbehaving children. While it is true that our education system has advanced far past that idea in the last 50 years, there are still teachers today who abstain from using humor in their classes. Whether it be fear of a joke not landing or being confused as to why humor should be used at all, some teachers still won’t add this spice into their teaching soup.

I’m not saying teachers who don’t make use of humor are against laughter per se, but they may not realize the benefits that it has for their students and themselves. I think some of

the hesitation comes from the idea that humor in the classroom is simply corny knock-knock jokes, but Professor Ted Powers of Park College denies that claim with his definition of classroom humor. He identifies it as not, “limited to jokes or humorous stories but [it] can include props, puns, short stories, anecdotes, riddles, or cartoons. It can be anything that creates

a positive feeling in students and makes them smile and laugh” (Powers). Humor is basically this

vast ocean of material that all teachers and professors can sail out to and find what works for them. For the purposes of this speech, when I say “education” or “classroom” I am referencing

the standard American classroom full of students with one teacher giving a lesson. And really,

this speech applies to all age groups and grade levels. In fact, it may be more important for

teachers who instruct older students because Professor Todd Finley of ECU found that student

engagement steadily decreases as students get older (Finley). Now, I get it, this topic sounds

frivolous, I mean, I’m surrounded by speeches warning against Socialism and the dangers of

automation. But the education we receive in our childhood is monumentally important for all

students’ success in the future. Academic achievement in school affects a person’s future job

opportunities and income. And the plague of classroom boredom and stress can burnout gifted

students and increase the already high levels of high school dropouts. Education in America

must have an element of humor.

**Topic: Enneagram**

At the turn of the twentieth century, a man named George Gurdjieff found a strange symbol called the Enneagram. Derived from the Greek words ennea (nine) and grammos (figure), it simply means “nine-pointed figure” (Riso and Hudson, 9). Gurdjieff developed this symbol into a philosophy and passed the wisdom along to his students. By the 1970s the Enneagram entered the church building. Now taught as a complex typing system based on core motivations, fourth and fifth generation students of Gurdjieff would author popular books such as “The Enneagram: A Christian Perspective” and “The Road Back to You” (Montenegro). Users can agree the Enneagram has gained popularity due to these publications by Richard Rohr and Ian Morgan Cron. These Christian perspectives have sparked exponential interest within the church. The common ground ends, however, on a true definition of the Enneagram. Additionally, disagreement arises on the implications of the system and how Christians should respond. In any case, this issue cannot simply be swept under the rug.

**Topic: Socialism**

Have you ever heard someone refer to history as “a struggle between classes?” According to Karl Marx, author of The Communist Manifesto, this definition sums up the history of the world since the beginning of time. Founder of communism and instigator of modern socialism, Marx’s ideas have clearly made their mark on society. From the European Revolutions of 1848 to the rise of the modern-day American “democratic socialist,” Marx’s ideas have whispered in the ear of those in need. Some people gave in to his promises, pledging their undying support to his ideas, in hope of a better world. The poor, the alienated, the working class, as Marx called them, pursued the construction of a new communist community, often through violent methods. However, time and time again, the implementation of this communism resulted in devastation, despair, and death. In fact, communism's tally of casualties numbers in the millions and is still rising today. Today, we hear those whispers again. Only today, the whispers call for “democratic socialism.”

Historically, leaders have committed atrocities too grotesque to be divulged in the name

of Marx’s ideas. Since its publishing in 1848, The Communist Manifesto has spurred bloody

conflicts and genocide across the world. Understandably, too, for Marx himself called for “the

violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie [capitalist society to lay] the foundation” for communism’s

implementation (Marx and Engels 79). Beginning in 1848, revolutions engulfed Europe, the

consequences of years of new ideas, such as communism. Some wanted equality. Others wanted

freedom. All of them wanted a voice - for absolutist governments to hear their cries for reform

and open the door for change. Most of these revolutions were almost entirely unsuccessful. Absolute monarchs retained their authority, and the people received nothing. Still, the whispers

of communism and its close relative, socialism, spread across Europe, slowly capturing the

support of revolutionaries who felt their cries fell on deaf ears. Little did these revolutionaries

know that communism was not a solution to their problems. It became their problem.

Socialism and communism are understood today in a variety of ways. This presentation

will seek to clearly define the connection between the two. Socialism, as defined by Merriam-Webster’s School Dictionary, is “any of various economic systems based on collective or governmental ownership and administration of the means of production and distribution of goods” (“socialism”). While there are differing ideas and conceptions of socialism, this thesis

will focus on socialism as the state’s seizure of the means of production. The goal of socialism is

to provide an effective transition from a capitalist economy to a communist one. A communist

country is basically the extreme version of, or the product of socialism, with one party controlling the economy and government in hopes of creating a classless society. Democratic

socialism relies on democratic methods, such as voting, to usher in socialism. This thesis will

attempt to persuade the audience of socialism’s dangers, especially to America. I will provide

historical examples of socialism’s failures, in hopes of exposing the suppression, persecution,

and tyranny endured by the people who lived and are still living under its regimes.

Statistics indicate that the main supporters of this socialism in America today are young

people. Rand Paul, US Senator from Kentucky, references this new change: “Gallup, in a 2016

poll, records 55 percent of millennials as favoring socialism” (Paul 6). Clearly, young people

want change. Members of Generation Z and Millenials are campaigning in the streets, protesting

issues they believe call for immediate reform. The question is, is socialism the change they really

want?

Is there anything Americans can do to combat socialism’s rise? There are a variety of

approaches to this problem. First of all, there needs to be an agreement that acknowledges the

seriousness of the situation. Americans, the younger generations in particular, are drawn toward

socialism and the “benefits” it offers. Many are not aware of the destruction it has caused in

other countries. Many American politicians, the Press, and the entertainment industry encourage

the socialist agenda. Why should young Americans challenge it? One clear solution is to work

towards better and more comprehensive education regarding these political systems in middle,

high school, and higher education. In America, free speech is protected by the Constitution and

democratic participation is encouraged. Parents can become aware and involved in their students’ education, pushing for a realistic presentation of ideas such as socialism and communism instead of their celebration. Knowledge is power - once the American people and

specifically younger generations are aware of the problem, they can take steps to oppose ideas

like socialism. On the other hand, some people may support certain political parties or organizations that actively campaign against socialism. Either through financial donations or

voting, people may choose to fight for political ideas they believe are the best. Whatever the

solution, Americans should intently consider the threat socialism poses to American life and

ideals.

**Topic: Environmentalism**

(History of the Issue) While perhaps human beings have always held some awareness for the environment and creation, the environmental movement in the modern sense began in the mid 1950s with the publishing of Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*. Carson’s portrait of an idyllic American town slowly overtaken by the horrors that follow the chemical DDT marked the start of a worldwide move towards a greener earth (Kallen 10-15). Up until this point, the government had implemented no environmental regulations following the rapid industrialization of America. Before the harmful effects of pollution and waste became widely recognized, people simply accepted these things as “the cost of living in modern society. But,” as Kallen writes, “by the end of the 1960s, the public was growing increasingly angry about the unregulated pollution spewing into the air and water. A chorus of voices rose up to demand that the government do something to preserve and protect the earth for future generations” (24). This led to the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and acts such as the Clean Water Act. After this monumental progress, a change in attitude occurred with the focus on the economy in America and the election of a more conservative president in the 1980s. The administration of the time relaxed regulations surrounding environmental protections, citing economical concerns, leading to the polarization of environmental issues and the partisan nature of environmentalism in the modern day.

(Stasis) (Fact) In this thesis, I plan to explore and evaluate environmentalism and the implementation of sustainable practices with a Christian lens. When reviewing environmentalism in this day and age, many Christians find no issue in the concept of caring for and bettering the Earth. Scriptures such as in Genesis and the Psalms remind us that we have a responsibility for the Earth and all of Creation. Most, if not all, accept that human beings have been wasteful as evidenced by the enormity of our landfills and the existence of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. Air pollution, prevalent not just in developing or second-world countries like China but in America as well, affects us all. Disagreement, however, arises in the severity of environmental issues the action necessary to remedy an issues. (Definition) In this thesis I plan to address the theological merit and biblical evidence for environmentalism and explore possible actions that we, as Christians, should take to follow God’s commands as they pertain to the Earth. At this point, you may ask: “What is environmentalism? What is ‘sustainable?’ To reference a reliable and well-known source, Merriam Webster defines environmentalism as “advocacy of the preservation, restoration, or improvement of the natural environment; (*especially*) the movement to control pollution.” Sustainability is “of, relating to, or being a method of harvesting or using a resource so that the resource is not depleted or permanently damaged; of or relating to a lifestyle involving the use of sustainable methods.” (Quality) Why should we care about environmentalism and sustainability? Is it even an issue individuals should care about? Environmental issues, ranging from pollution to waste, affect people in a myriad of ways. Damaging the earth, allowing for waste to infiltrate our lakes, streams, and drinking water harms people—God’s image bearers. It also, however, reflects an issue that goes deeper than pollution; environmental damage reveals man’s ignorance of the Creation Mandate. (Policy) And thus, in this thesis, I will explore ways in which individuals can take action and fulfill God’s commands and follow His Word. Certainly, caring for people comes before the environment. However, caring for creation directly and indirectly influences the health of humanity. From contacting lawmakers to making changes to incorporate a less environmentally impactful lifestyle, this thesis will suggest and demonstrate tangible ways to adopt sustainable practices and make a difference.