

Core C Comp and Lit | TRIAC Method Handout

In writing, it is important to begin by making your point clear and concise. We do this through a thesis statement when considering an essay, and through a topic sentence when considering a paragraph. In the upcoming weeks, we will be working on building solid, evidence-supported paragraphs using the TRIAC method.

The TRIAC method structures a paragraph sentence by sentence as follows:

- **T = TOPIC:** This sentence indicates what the paragraph will be about and answers the main part of the prompt. (Sentence 1)
- **R = RESTRICT (aka assertion):** Use this sentence to make a claim about the topic. It is less broad than the topic (restricted) and makes a specific point. (Sentence 2)
Key Terms for Restrict Sentence: In fact, In other words, In addition . . .
- **I = ILLUSTRATE (aka evidence):** Provide an example or a quote to prove the claim made in the “restrict” sentence. (Sentence 3)
Key Terms for Illustrate Sentence: For instance, As an illustration, For example . . .
- **A = ANALYZE (aka commentary):** In **more than one sentence**, explain how the example or quote proves the point made in the “restrict” sentence. (Sentences 4 & 5)
Key Terms for Analyze sentence: This is important because _____, The significance of this is _____ . . .
- **C = CLINCHER:** Repeat or reflect 2-3 key words from the topic. (Sentence 6)

Example Prompt and TRIAC breakdown:

1. In John Smith's "The General History of Virginia," consider Smith's point of view. Why does he use this particular point of view, and how does it influence the reader's understanding of Smith's message?

Topic sentence: In John Smith's "The General History of Virginia," he uses a third person point of view to make himself appear as the humble hero.

Restrict: In fact, though Smith's story actually presents events he experienced first-hand, he writes as if he is a detached and objective narrator, making the reader think of him as better than he is.

Illustrate: For example, when Natives attack and kill some of the men in Smith's party, he says, through himself as narrator, that "Smith little dreaming of that accident . . . finding he was beset with 200 savages . . . was shot in his thigh a little and had many arrows stuck in his clothes . . . till at last they took him prisoner" (26).

Analyze: This is important because it shows that the lives of the men did not really matter to Smith. He talks more about himself, through his role as narrator, than he does about the men who lost their lives during the expedition he led. Instead of taking responsibility for lives lost, he talks about himself and how he struggled and succeed against the Natives who attacked.

Clincher: John Smith tells of his first-hand experiences in the third person through the eyes of a narrator, showing his willingness to make the reader think of him as a hero.

Put it together

In John Smith's "The General History of Virginia," he uses a third person point of view to make himself appear as the humble hero. In fact, though Smith's story actually presents events he experienced first-hand, he writes as if he is a detached and objective narrator, making the reader think of him as better than he is. For example, when Natives attack and kill some of the men in Smith's party, he says, through himself as narrator, that "Smith little dreaming of that accident . . . finding he was beset with 200 savages . . . was shot in his thigh a little and had many arrows stuck in his clothes . . . till at last they took him prisoner" (26). This is important because it shows that the lives of the men did not really matter to Smith. He talks more about himself, through his role as narrator, than he does about the men who lost their lives during the expedition he led. Instead of taking responsibility for lives lost, he talks about himself and how he struggled and succeed against the Natives who attacked. John Smith tells of his first-hand experiences in the third person through the eyes of a narrator, showing his willingness to make the reader think of him as a hero.