

WRITERS' WORKSHOP MINILESSON: SUPPORTING DETAILS

I've noticed a number of problems people are having in writing their Supporting Details.

First, people are not re-telling enough of the story and therefore Supporting Idea paragraphs have often not been long enough. Strive for 10 sentences.

Second, people are not introducing their details well and are not transitioning between details within a single Supporting Idea paragraph.

Third, people are not spelling out clearly enough HOW their Supporting Details PROVE their Supporting Idea Statements (and thus their theses).

So, in order to solve these problems I have three suggestions.

1a) Assume your reader has never read the book you are talking about and take time to carefully retell parts of the story as part of your Details. Just be careful not to tell the story in choppy fashion—retelling the story is a skill.

b) Try to memorize two or three short quotes from your Focus Text that you can include in your essay. If you can include a few exact quotes in your essay it will help you tremendously on the MCAS.

2. a) After your Supporting Idea Statement, use a transition word to introduce your Details. Some possibilities include:

For example

For instance

Indeed

The event in which ** illustrates this idea well.**

In particular,

****** demonstrates this when *******

This idea is illuminated by Achebe (author) when ****

Achebe (author) portrays *** when *******

First of all,

b) If you have two separate details in one paragraph, transition to your second Detail by using an appropriate transition word. Here are some possibilities:

Another example of *** occurs when *****.**

Equally important is the moment when *****

Further,

Furthermore,

In addition

Moreover

3. Check throughout your paragraph that your details are clearly PROVING your Supporting Idea Statement—you may want to actively try to use key words from the Question and from your Thesis as you explain the significance of your Supporting Details.