

Interpretation Essay Organizer Instructions

These instructions are designed to help you deliver them to students, while you are modeling how to fill in the Essay Organizer. Be sure to remind students this organizer is only one visual representation of an outline. There are many different ways to create an outline.

STEP 1: Have students take out their Essay Organizer and be prepared to fill in their ideas while you fill in the organizer on the overhead. Tell students they may not use your ideas. They must come up with their own.

STEP 2: FILLING IN THE INTRODUCTION BOX – The first line is their thesis. Ask students what a thesis is. They should be able to tell you right off the bat that it is the main idea of the essay. Ask students what a good thesis statement might be for their first interpretation essay. Help them by defining interpretation with them. Then tell them they are interpreting their Coat of Arms so that others will understand it. Hopefully they will come up with something “The importance of family and culture are the essential themes throughout my Coat of Arms project.” Or: “The Coat of Arms shows me to be an extremely thoughtful and pensive person”. Write out the example thesis on the Essay Organizer. While you are writing it down, ask students to think of their own thesis. Have them write it on the thesis line of their Essay Organizer.

Tell them the next three lines are the three criteria they will use as reasons to support their thesis statement. Ask students what criteria they might use to interpret their Coat of Arms. They may choose to look at images, symbols, color, culture, heritage, family. Write their sample ideas on the three lines indicated in the box. Some examples might be:

- 1) The **IMAGE** of the robin in my Coat of Arms is placed above the other images because of it’s central symbolic importance to my family’s history with birds.
- 2) The **COLOR** of red that is used throughout my Coat of Arms represents both a connection to my family’s history as well as my individuality.
- 3) The motto that I have developed ties together all of the images and **SYMBOLS** in my Coat of Arms by being a tribute to my grandparents.

While you are writing, ask them to think of their own criteria that they will use as reasons to explain how their thesis could be true. They should list them on the three lines marked reasons.

STEP 3: FILLING IN THE SECOND LEVEL OF BOXES – Tell students these are the body paragraphs. The boxes contain the criteria stated in the introduction as reasons to support the thesis statement. Have students rewrite them on the first line of each respective box. Then for each criteria/reason, students must give at least two pieces of evidence that support it. They may give evidence from any of the images or the motto in their Coat of Arms. Ask students to give you two sample pieces of evidence from Columbus’ Coat of Arms that goes with the each reason or criteria stated. Write them in the appropriate boxes. While you are writing, ask students to look at their essay organizers and their Coat of Arms. Have them decide what evidence they are going to use to support their criteria or reasons. Have them fill it in the boxes for each.

STEP 4: FILLING IN THE CONCLUSION – The conclusion is where you restate your thesis in a new and different way. You should include any new ideas you may have about your interpretation of your Coat of Arms. Take some ideas from students for a new way to say the thesis they came up with in STEP 1. Jot it down for them in the box. While you are writing, ask them to write think about how they might say their thesis in a new and different way. Have them write it on their organizer in the appropriate box.

STEP 6: WRITING YOUR ESSAY IN PARAGRAPH FORM – Tell students now they are ready to write their essay in paragraph form. Have them take the ideas from their organizer and write the first draft of their essay. Remind them that spelling, punctuation and grammar do not count on a first draft. Ideas do. They should make sure they have all of their ideas written out logically in the format from their Essay Organizer. Tell them the easiest way to begin an essay is to start with their thesis statement. Then write out the reasons or criteria that they believe makes their thesis statement true. Finally, they will need a good closing sentence. Using the Sample Essay Organizer you have just created, have students help you to write out the first paragraph so they will know how to start their essay. I suggest writing a sample 2nd paragraph for them too so that they can see how their reason backed up by solid evidence should flow.

