

Research Writing Practice: Directions for Drafting Your Paragraph

You've finished your research on the historical setting of *The Secret Life of Bees* and created a Works Cited page (see sample if you need a reminder on how to format it).

Now it is time to write your paragraph, which will include parenthetical citations to show where you found each piece of your information. Follow this basic outline:

1. **Topic Sentence**—this should clearly state the purpose of the paragraph. Think of it like a mini-thesis that addresses the prompt to which you are writing.

*Examples: The movie accurately conveys what life was like for a middle-class American family during the Great Depression.

Red Pollard's character is clearly influenced by his living during the Great Depression.

2. **Facts from the movie and your online source(s)**—you should have 5-7 sentences that compare/contrast the movie and the facts you found in your 2 sources. **YOU MUST INCLUDE PARENTHETICAL CITATIONS FOR ALL OF THE FACTS YOU USE!** Please use at least two direct quotations—one from each of your sources. Both online sources and the movie must be referenced.

*Examples: On-screen Seabiscuit becomes the crowd favorite right away, representing in many ways the average American who had been suffering as a result of a bad economy (*Seabiscuit*).

When the real Seabiscuit faced War Admiral in 1938, the race was seen by many as “the East Coast establishment of bankers and their beautiful horses versus a nation of disillusioned have-nots who championed a hero that had been beat up just like them” (Lovgren).

3. **Concluding thought**—this final sentence or two should tie up the “loose ends” of your paragraph. Consider addressing the “so what?” question. Why is your topic sentence significant?

*Examples: Seeing on screen how difficult life was during the Great Depression helps the viewer understand just how inspiring a story like Seabiscuit's would have been for people during that time.

Had Red not been a product of this time period, the story would not be as inspirational as it is.

Your grade on this assignment will be based on the following criteria:

- ___/1 Topic sentence is clear, concise, and makes a claim (addressing the prompt).
 - ___/5 There is sufficient evidence from both online sources and the movie to support the claim in the topic sentence—all evidence has properly formatted parenthetical citations.
 - ___/3 At least two properly formatted direct quotations are used.
 - ___/1 Paragraph attempts a concluding thought that is clear, not redundant.
 - ___/2 Paragraph is free of major errors—no run-ons or fragments.
 - ___/2 Works Cited page is in proper format—alphabetical order, one-inch margins, labeled correctly
 - ___/6 Works Cited page contains proper citations for movie and two credible online sources (2 points each)
- ___/20 points total