

Hi Jasper,

I'm Megan, one of the WriteAway tutors and the person who reviewed your paper today. It looks like you're writing a comparison assignment about a film and reading – I'm looking forward to reading your work! I'll review what you've asked for help with today (keeping an eye on grammar and paragraph length), tell you what I'll focus on in the time I have to review your assignment and why it could be a good focus for your revisions. I'll also follow up with some Next Steps at the end.

I see you've submitted a PDF document, which is a file format that doesn't allow me to insert comments directly. The next time you submit, I recommend you submit your writing in a .doc, .docx, .odt, or .txt file format. This will allow the tutor to add comments directly to your document. For now, I'll provide feedback in this separate document with examples from your writing.

Let's get started!

Strengths

I see that you've selected some very interesting quotations from the reading that you've done, which helps me to see what you find important in the text that you've read. Below, I'll talk a little about integrating this evidence so that it can be even more effective.

I also noticed that in your introduction paragraph you've identified similarities and differences – that looks like it is an important part of the assignment.

Concerns to Consider

Thesis Statement

Right now, I'm having trouble identifying a specific thesis statement in your assignment in your introduction paragraph. Creating a clear thesis statement tells the reader what you'll focus on and why it matters to your analysis. I can see that you name a few similarities and differences between the film and the reading and that you point to some potential themes: struggle and education. Working with and reflecting on these themes could lead to a strong thesis statement.

Remember that a thesis statement should:

- answer a specific question
- take on a subject on which reasonable people could disagree (in other words, it presents an argument, not a fact)
- deal with a subject that can be adequately addressed, given the nature of the assignment
- express one main idea

Note that it is totally okay for your thesis to shift while you are writing – it is just important that you make sure that in your final draft, you have identified a core argument that is well supported and developed throughout the whole of your paper. It is important to identify what the core argument of this paper will be and how the other arguments will offer support to this core argument, if they are developed at all. Your thesis statement should provide the focus for your essay, and so it is important to be precise.

I like the following resource from the University of Toronto because it shows some examples of strong and not so strong thesis statements and provides focused advice for developing a thesis statement,

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/planning-and-organizing/thesis-statements>

This resource from the University of Indiana offers a variety of strategies for developing a thesis including how to move from a broad idea to a focused statement on a particular topic,

<https://wts.indiana.edu/writing-guides/how-to-write-a-thesis-statement.html>

Paragraph Structure

You asked me to comment on paragraph length. I think that the length of your paragraphs is okay, but you'll want to take a closer look at the structure of your paragraphs and how they support your main idea. Right now, I see that you do offer some descriptions of the film and reading. How can you add to this description with some analysis? Thinking carefully about paragraph structure can help.

In the paragraph that begins with “For example, the cave...” (second paragraph on the first page), I see your focus is on the idea of a prison – having one focus per paragraph is important. However, as I read through this paragraph, I sort of get lost – I’m not quite sure how examples

match up from the film and the reading.

The paragraph that begins “There are also plenty of...” (first paragraph on the second page), seems to focus on the idea of education, but it was not so clear to me exactly how you understand education in the film and reading – can you say more about it? Clearly describing the theme of education and then showing the differences will help your reader see the works as you see them.

Paragraphs have different jobs – they can define key terms, present evidence, reflect on existing work, and/or analyze material. Sometimes paragraphs do all these things. Paragraphs usually start with a topic sentence that has a connection to the thesis statement. This shows your reader the connection between the new information in your paragraph and how it matters to your argument. The sentences that follow the topic sentence develop what you’ve said in your topic sentence and often use evidence to support a claim that you’ve made. A paragraph normally concludes with your own perspective on the information and prepares to transition to the next paragraph.

I really like this resource because it goes through the different elements of a paragraph:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/planning-and-organizing/paragraphs>

Using Evidence

It’s good to see you drawing from source material to support your ideas. The material you use in quotations, summary, and paraphrase should be framed with your own words and properly referenced. I noticed a couple of quotes in the paragraph that starts with “For example, the cave...” that are standing alone as sentences.

Review your whole paper to make sure that all your quotes are well integrated. As you review your paper, ask yourself: Is it clear where each quote comes from – the film or the movie? Have you introduced the film and the reading so that a person reading your paper can understand where you’ve drawn the material?

This resource provides some important questions to ask when using evidence:

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/evidence/>

- Scroll down to start at the header that says “Using Evidence in an Argument”

Once you've introduced and integrated the evidence, make sure that your formatting and referencing is correct. You note that you should use MLA style. Right now, your paper isn't using this style. That's okay – a bit of work and a review of a key resource should make it easy to correct.

This is my favourite resource for all things to do with referencing and formatting:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/index.html

- You can see in that menu on the left different examples for citation and referencing, including how to create a “Works Cited” page which you will likely need to include.

Next Steps

- Develop a clear introduction
- Review paragraph structure and more clearly organize ideas around the themes you want to discuss
- Introduce and integrate evidence
- Include correct citations and a Works Cited page
- Resubmit to WriteAway for further feedback

Thanks, Jasper, for using the WriteAway service. Because this is your first submission of this assignment, you can send it to us for further feedback two more times once you've had a chance to work on some revisions. We'd love to hear about your WriteAway experience, [please fill out our short survey](#)

Good luck with your assignment,

Megan