Choose one moment from the past year, one moment that you remember clearly.

In **one sentence**, tell what happened.
Why do we keep teaching the 5-paragraph essay?
Why do we keep teaching the 5-paragraph essay?

Answer:

I suspect that many teachers teach the form—or variants of it—because they see no teachable alternative.

-Thomas Newkirk

The School Essay Manifesto (page 40)
No teachable alternative.
If writing is to be a unique mode of thinking, we should ask how writing can foster and track movement of the mind.

--Thomas Newkirk

*The School Essay Manifesto*
Most really engaging pieces of writing have something from each hand.
The Story of My Thinking

What I used to think

But this happened

So now I think
Look back at the sentence you wrote.
Imagine that it would go in the middle box.

What would you write for your other two boxes?
### The Story of My Thinking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I used to think</th>
<th>But this happened</th>
<th>So now I think</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Kernel essay:
1. I used to think that I’m a liberal non-racist woman.
2. But then I read Ta-Nehisi Coates.
3. Now I’m examining how much all of us have been part of the oppression of our brothers and sisters of color.

-Gretchen Bernabei
Kernel essay:
1. I used to think that my room would look better purple.
2. Then we painted my room purple.
3. Now I know that some solutions are short-term.
   
   - 7th grader
You have already written a sentence for the middle box.

Take a minute and write the other two sentences.
You used the structure we call “The Story of My Thinking.”

What you wrote is called a kernel essay. It’s a seed. All it needs is details to turn each sentence into a part of an essay.

Take a minute share your kernel essay with a couple of people at your table.
The Story of My Thinking

Expository Writing Activities for 13 Teaching Situations
So we began to stockpile structures, starting with the most obvious.
Comparing Notes (Mine and Others)

- Some people think
- And other people think
- But I think
- What that tells me

Tevye's Debate

- On one hand
- On the other hand
- But on the other hand
- But on the other hand
- How I can be guided when the choice is so tough

Evolution of a Term (word or phrase in the prompt)

- What the word meant to me when I was 4
- What I was a little older
- What the word means to me now
- What the word will probably mean when I am ___ (pick an age)

Tribute to the Person Who Taught me Something

- What the lesson is
- Flashback to the lesson
- Description of the person
- Lyrics or words you can remember that person saying (on the subject)
- What I wish I could find out now from that person
Students began to create their own structures.
Discovering A Lie

Someone told me  So I believed  Then I found out  So now I think/know...

Alyssa Flores

Changing Your Mind

I believe this  But society proved me wrong by doing this...

So then I believe this  But then this happened  So now I believe this...

Greg Herbst

I Wish

I wish that  But I know  And knowing this  Makes me believe...

Steven Young
Who Reacted When

Why this happened
How this happened
When this happened
What people thought about it

Alex Blue

Metamorphosis

How you felt before it happened
How you felt while it was happening
How you felt after it happened
How you feel now
What you believe now

Kelsey Mahan

What the Heck

My friends did this
I thought about it
I believe _______ so
I did this
They reacted like this
So now, we ...

Casey Lewis
We captured structures that we saw around us.
We captured some traditional structures.
Compare and Contrast

____ and ____ are very much alike.

They both ____ and ____.

However, there are some differences between the two.

For one thing, ____.

Another way they are different is ____.

Problem and Solution

____ is happening.

This is a problem because ____.

This is happening because ____.

Another thing contributing to the problem is ____.

We must stop this so that ____.
We created some structures for responding to literature.

### How I Figured It Out/Cracking the Code

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I was totally confused when I read “______”</th>
<th>So I tried ____</th>
<th>And then ____</th>
<th>And now I understand ______</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Did I Miss Something?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“_______” confused me</th>
<th>I thought maybe it means ____</th>
<th>Or, I thought maybe it means ____</th>
<th>Then I read “____” and knew ____</th>
<th>I knew it made sense when I read “____”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### The Path of Wondering

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I wondered ______</th>
<th>When I read “_______”</th>
<th>So I asked myself ______</th>
<th>And I read “_______”</th>
<th>Finally I figured out ______</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
### If I Were Making a Movie of This, I Would Have to Have

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A movie version should be</th>
<th>I'd include</th>
<th>And include</th>
<th>And include</th>
<th>All of these would create</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### One Way I Could Change This Story While Keeping It Basically The Same

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One thing I could change and it would still be the same piece</th>
<th>Not this because</th>
<th>Not this because</th>
<th>Maybe this</th>
<th>What's essential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
In any language.
And then we started to notice structures in other places...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>David Brooks Editorials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This happened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An obvious way to think about it is ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The problem with that view is ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A better way to look at it would be ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

.contributed by Thomas Newkirk
In Shakespearean soliloquies

To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life:
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
Law's delay, yon feuds, yon times antipathies,
That make calamity of so long life.

Dilemma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice: Staying the same or changing</th>
<th>What change would mean</th>
<th>Biggest disadvantage of change</th>
<th>Biggest disadvantage of staying the same</th>
<th>How change might make it worse</th>
<th>What happens if you just don't decide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Hamlet - Act 3, Scene 1

How indecision makes the chance go by worse
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.
IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776
The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government having its foundation on such principles and institutional form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. — Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and that to alter human institutions, so fundamental, requires very grave and solemn deliberation. — We therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States, that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

Problem/Solution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why people deliver messages like this</th>
<th>Our deep belief</th>
<th>How things are supposed to work</th>
<th>The problem</th>
<th>Proof</th>
<th>What we have tried (unsuccessfully)</th>
<th>Our solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Declaration of Independence

Guards for their future
suffrance of these Colonies: and s
constraints them to alter their former Systems of
The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of
injurious and usurpations, all having in direct object the
of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove

It is then their duty to declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government having its foundation on such principles and institutional form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. — Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and that to alter human institutions, so fundamental, requires very grave and solemn deliberation. — We therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States, that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.
We captured even more.
The hunt continues.
And for children too young for words, we can make text structures in pictures.
Baa Baa Black Sheep

Baa baa black sheep, have you any wool?
Yes sir, yes sir, three bags full!
One for the master, one for the dame,
And one for the little boy
Who lives down the lane.
Students become supercharged with structure choices.

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The Story of My Thinking