

**\*\*TYPES OF ELABORATION / YOUR LIST\*\***

1. explain using examples or reasons why
2. define – clarify the meaning of the Major Point; put quotations marks around the word(s) quoted; use a dictionary when available
3. describe – use words to create a visual image which the reader can also picture
4. evaluate – use evidence to determine the value or truth of the Major Point
5. compare and contrast – show the similarities and differences
6. use figurative language: an analogy, a metaphor, a simile, or personification
7. use an appropriate quote from history, literature, speeches
8. use a quote from the prompt
9. cite an appropriate example from life experience
10. create a hypothetical situation (What if?)
11. tell a story or anecdote (fictional)
12. use cause and effect – *Because of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ is the result*

**\*\*Add to your notebook.**

## TYPES OF ELABORATION / STUDENT EXAMPLES

### 1. explain using examples or reasons why

For example, when a talented debate student moved and changed schools, he was faced with the decision between joining the debate team with the “intellectuals” or joining the football team with the “in crowd.” Although he was a really talented debater, he joined the football team to be accepted and spent the season sitting on the bench.

### 2. define – clarify the meaning of the Major Point; put quotation marks around the word(s) quoted; use a dictionary when available

A drummer is defined as “one who plays a drum, a percussion instrument (noun)”; To march is “to move steadily with a rhythmic stride (verb).” “To march to a different drummer,” as Thoreau suggests, means to follow your own path, to refuse to be shaped into the cookie cutter image. In other words, dare to be different.

### 3. describe – use words to create a visual image that the reader can also picture

Society’s expectations are heavy: a weight welded to a rusted iron chain, shackled to your legs, pulling you down. To free yourself from the grasping weight of the manacles, you must cast them aside and allow yourself to pursue your heart, to seize your dream.

### 4. evaluate – use evidence to determine the value or truth of the Major Point

Look at a magazine – for teens, for women, and even for men – and the evidence of the cookie cutter mold is blatant. We must be thin; we must look natural; we must have thick, shiny hair; we must buy beautiful, expensive clothes – we must fit the mold that the magazine reveals. Regardless of our *uniqueness*, the only way to fit in with the “in-crowd” is to look and to act just like they do.

### 5. compare and contrast – show the similarities and differences

Many people are comfortable with the cookie-cutter image, finding security in being like everyone else. Others reject security and seek to be unique, to be special in their own ways. Certainly one’s life is simpler if he/she fits the mold; decision-making is easy because others make decisions for the conformist. In contrast, the individualist has to make tough decisions often, but he/she thrives on the challenges.

### 6. use figurative language: an analogy, a metaphor, a simile, or personification

Often society’s demands are like a recipe book. If we carefully follow the directions and use the correct ingredients, we will fit perfectly in the mold and will be just like

## EMBEDDING QUOTES

*Look back at the quotes in Major Points 1, 2, and 3 on the previous page. These quotes are "embedded," so that they seem natural in the sentence. You will need to embed quotes in your writing, also. When you embed quotes you don't use complete sentences from the passage. Instead you weave words and phrases into your analysis paragraph in order to support what you are saying about the passage. Look at the difference in the quotes when you simply state a quote and when you embed that quote:*

### STATING:

**MAJOR POINT 2:** The author states that "Three months of camp life on Lake Tahoe would restore an Egyptian mummy to his pristine vigor, and give him an appetite like an alligator. I do not mean the oldest and driest mummies, of course, but the fresher ones....The air up there....is the same as the angels breathe."

### EMBEDDING:

**MAJOR POINT 2:** Praising the mountain air as that which "the angels breathe," the author next claims that "three months" of the heavenly air can revitalize an "Egyptian mummy (a 'fresher one') to its pristine vigor."

*You can see that the embedded quote sounds much more natural. Try embedding quotes in your own writing.*

## LITERARY PRESENT TENSE

Certain rules must be followed when literature is being analyzed. One rule that can be somewhat confusing is in the use of tense. When you discuss an author's words or ideas, the present tense must be used because the words and ideas are new and alive as they are read again, even if the author has been dead for centuries. You may refer to the author's life in the past tense, but his words are ever present. Consider the following example:

*Edgar Allan Poe lived only a short forty years, from 1809-1849, but he left us a legacy of unforgettable literature as well as some lasting rules of literary criticism that writers still follow today. In his essay "The Philosophy of Composition," Poe tells us that writers should not begin with a plot and just fill in the details, but he states that one should begin "with the consideration of an effect."*

In the same manner, the actions within a work of literature should remain in present tense – they are happening as they are read. Of course, regular tense rules apply to anything that happened before. Look at the following example:

*In "The Cask of Amontillado" Fortunato believes that his expertise as a wine connoisseur is being utilized as he is led down into the catacombs. But the reader realizes that Montressor is intending to kill Fortunato and has planned carefully – he has already planted the trap by the time Fortunato enters the underground burial plots.*

## MODEL PARAGRAPH

**PROMPT:** Read the following; then write a paragraph supporting the validity (truth) of the verse. You may use specific evidence from the verse, or you may also draw upon your experiences or observations.

### MODEL

Read the nursery rhyme and the following paragraph carefully because this is the way you will be writing in the rest of this unit. This assignment is a model for your assignments which follow.

### A WISE OLD OWL

A wise old owl sat in an oak.  
The more he heard, the less he spoke;  
The less he spoke, the more he heard.  
Why aren't we all like that wise old bird?

## BASIC ANALYSIS PARAGRAPH FORMAT

**TONES:** Highlight words then give tones

philosophical, clever

**PURPOSE:** Your opinion of the author's intent in the passage (what he/she wants us to understand from the passage). This opinion is not written separately, but it is often included in your Topic Sentence. Look at both the passage and the prompt to determine the purpose.

The author wants the reader to understand that a "wise" person listens instead of speaking because he learns from others while listening. You are to use evidence from the nursery rhyme, from experience, or from reading to prove that people would be wise to follow the owl's example of speaking less and listening more.

**TOPIC SENTENCE:** This is your opinion in response to a specific point in the prompt. The prompt tells you to support the validity or truth of the verse, so you need to determine what proof you can use for support. What negative consequences have you seen when people talk instead of listen? How could listening have prevented those consequences? The topic sentence should be your opinion that suggests the proof which you will use to support the opinion. The following Topic Sentence does just that:

*Like the wise old owl who listens instead of speaking, man could wisely avoid hurting others and prevent making a fool of himself at times by following the owl's example.*

**MAJOR POINT 1:** An idea or example from the passage or your experience or reading which supports your interpretation in the TOPIC SENTENCE; sometimes answers the question "What?" (minimum of two MP's in a paragraph; may contain quotes)

In what ways could a person be wiser by listening instead of speaking? As suggested in the Topic Sentence, one way is the following:

*Some people make hurtful comments without even considering the effects that their careless words may have on others.*

**(ELABORATION 1, 2, 3, 4: (2 - 4 sentences)** Elaboration sentences may support the MAJOR POINT in different ways which we will study in this unit. In these elaboration sentences supporting Major Point 1, reasons/examples are used to explain why and how others are hurt.

**ELABORATION 1:** *Although we may have no malicious intent, we don't stop to consider the devastating effect our thoughtless remarks may have on a friend.* (example, life experience)

**ELABORATION 2:** *Because the only listening we often do is to the sound of our own voices, we risk unintentionally hurting someone.* (reason, cause and effect)

**ELABORATION 3:** *Some people learn from their mistakes and realize, like the owl, the value of speaking less and listening more; others, unfortunately, do not ever learn.* (compare and contrast, life experience)

**MAJOR POINT 2:** Another idea or example which supports the topic sentence. This point addresses the second effect of too much talk and too little listening which was suggested in the Topic Sentence--making a fool of the speaker.

*Also, not only can our careless words affect others, but they can make fools of us.*

**ELABORATION 1, 2, 3, 4:** Support MAJOR POINT 2

Again reasons or examples are used as elaboration to support the idea that speaking instead of listening can also hurt the speaker. He makes a fool of himself.

**ELABORATION 1:** *Some people simply can't resist a comment, even an inappropriate one at an inappropriate time, revealing their thoughtless lack of sensitivity.* (cause and effect, life experience)

**ELABORATION 2:** *Frequently, these people never realize that they have been objects of ridicule as a result of their own foolish statements, so they never try to change.* (hypothetical, cause and effect)

**ELABORATION 3:** *However, embarrassment can be a learning tool for those who are willing to take responsibility for their inappropriate comments, and who are willing to follow the owl's example to start listening.* (life experience, cause and effect, hypothetical)

**CONCLUDING SENTENCE:** Gives a finished feeling to the paragraph, while emphasizing the main idea

*Perhaps humans should learn a lesson in wisdom from that "wise old bird" and become a bit more "bird-brained."* (evaluate, implied metaphor, quotes from the prompt)

## ASSIGNMENT 7: INDIVIDUAL ELABORATION PRACTICE

### PROMPT

In *Poor Richard's Almanac*, one of Benjamin Franklin's aphorisms (a moral, a proverb, a saying) states, "He that lieth down with dogs shall rise up with fleas." Use specific evidence from your observation, experience, or reading to support the validity of this statement. Use the paragraph format below.

SEE PARAGRAPH FORMAT ON NEXT PAGE

**\*\*PARAGRAPH FORMAT\*\***

**TONES:**

**PURPOSE:** Your opinion of author's intent (what he/she wants us to understand); not written in paragraph; a technique to focus. Often included in Topic Sentence.

**TOPIC SENTENCE:** Your opinion in response to the prompt (You are to support the validity of the idea that some things, once broken, cannot be repaired.)

**MAJOR POINT #1:** Idea or example from passage which supports **TOPIC SENTENCE**; may answer "What?"; where main ideas in response to the prompt should be identified and developed; (minimum 2 MP's; quotes okay)

**ELABORATION 1:** Support **MAJOR POINT** with reasons/examples; may answer "Why?" or "How?"; 1 - 4 sentences; quotes okay

**ELABORATION 2:**

**ELABORATION 3:**

**ELABORATION 4:**

**MAJOR POINT 2:**

**ELABORATION 1:**

**ELABORATION 2:**

**ELABORATION 3:**

**ELABORATION 4:**

**CONCLUSION SENTENCE:** Gives a finished feeling to the paragraph

**\*\*Add to notebook.**

**NOW YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN! EACH STUDENT WILL WRITE AN INDIVIDUAL PARAGRAPH.**

**ASSIGNMENT 9: MORE PROMPTS  
FOR PRACTICE OR ASSESSMENT**

**1. PROMPT:** In *Poor Richard's Almanac*, one of Benjamin Franklin's aphorisms states, "If a man empties his purse into his head, no man can take it away from him. An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest." Use specific evidence from your observation, experience, or reading to support the validity of this statement.

**2. PROMPT:** In *An Essay on Criticism*, Alexander Pope states, "A little learning is a dangerous thing." Use specific evidence from your observation, experience, or reading to support the validity of this statement.