**THE “PIE” PARAGRAPH**

One of the easiest ways to develop a paragraph is using the PIE method.

**P = Point**

Often this is the TOPIC SENTENCE of your paragraph. Remember, each of your topic sentences should all be related to your thesis statement. To determine your point, think about these questions:

* What is the point of the paragraph?
* What claim is being made?

Ideas for making a Point:

* Decide on one point that will support your thesis.
* Try categorizing your ideas and commenting on recurring themes you find.

**I = Illustration**

This is generally your in-text citation and includes evidence that supports your point. This can be a quote, paraphrase, summary, or a combination. Your illustrations should support and help develop your point. In essence, they help you “prove” the claim you have made. Often, one of the best ways to support your point is to use quotes from the text(s) you have read. To help you find illustrations to support and develop your point, think about the following question.

* How is the **P**oint supported with specific data, experiences, or other factual material?

Ideas for Illustrations:

Information and examples from class readings (paraphrases are preferable, but short quotes can be effective too).

* + Personal experiences (stories, anecdotes, or examples from your life)
  + Representation in the media (newspapers, magazines, television)
  + Elements from popular culture (songs, movies, celebrities)
  + Statistics (polls, percentages, data from research studies)
  + Conclusions reached in journal articles

**E = Explanation**

The **E**xplanation is your analysis, comparison, elaboration, and/or evaluation of the **P**oint and **I**llustration given, connecting the **I**llustration with the **P**oint and the thesis statement of your paper.

* What does the provided information mean, or why does it matter?

Ideas for Explanations:

* Interpret, analyze, and explain the information, opinion, or quote you have included.
* Comment on the accuracy (or inaccuracy) of the quote, fact, data, information, in the **I**llustration.
* Decipher the meaning or try to better your understanding of your observation, findings, or experience.
* Suggest to the reader how this information relates to the Thesis

**Examples**:

This example is from a section on PIE in Chapter 6, “The Writing Process,” written by Dr. Anne Marie Hall at the University of Arizona Writing Program.

[**Point**:] Although the bald eagle is still listed as an endangered species, its ever-increasing population is very encouraging. [signal phrase:] According to ornithologist Jay Sheppard, [**Illustration**:] “The bald eagle seems to have stabilized its population, at the very least, almost everywhere.” [in-text citation:] (96). [**Explanation**:] We can assume then that there is hope for the longevity of this majestic bird.

The following is an example found in *The Little, Brown Handbook*:

[**Point**] Kate Chopin builds irony into every turn of “The Story of an Hour.” [**Illustration**] For example, Mrs. Mallard, the central character, finds joy in the death of her husband, whom she loves, because she anticipates “the long procession of years that would belong to her absolutely” (23). [**Explanation**] One would not expect a woman who loves her husband to look forward to life without him.