**Organizing Your Media Analysis**

1. After completing your “Generating Ideas” worksheet, did you determine that your movie or tv show portrays writing in ways that are helpful and accurate? Inaccurate and thus not helpful? Or mixed? This should be your thesis (though you may write your thesis statement in more specific terms, of course, such as identifying *ways* that the movie or tv show is accurate or inaccurate).
2. Reread your notes on the “Generating Ideas” sheet, specifically the section in which you summarize 2-4 messages about writing in the movie. These can be briefly stated as subcategories that can be used to develop and support your thesis from #1 (above). Write down *at least two* but *no more than four* subcategories.

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1. The subcategories above can be used to organize the body of your paper into main points.

*[Note: Organizing your paper according to ideas about writing will make your paper FAR more clear than organizing by the chronology in the popular text. Keep this point in mind for future writing you do in this class and in other classes!]*

In order to decide which subcategory should be first and second (and maybe third and fourth), notice any pattern or logic in the relationship between the subcategories.

If no pattern or logical relationship is obvious, some scholars build arguments from their weakest or most obvious to their strongest and most insightful argument; others suggest beginning with a decent argument, then having the weakest one in the middle, and ending with the strongest argument. If you’re not sure, I’d recommend experimenting. You can always switch the order when revising.

1. Secondary research / synthesis: Synthesize what writing researchers have to say about each of these subcategories by writing paragraphs that answer, “What do experts know about this subcategory?” You will most likely have one paragraph for each subcategory, though if the subcategory is complex, you may need to write more than one paragraph. You can use the information from your “Generating Ideas” worksheet to clarify what sources and what specific passages can help you explain to readers what experts have discovered about writing.
2. Primary research / analysis: Use a code (such as different colored highlighters) to mark all of your data from the Generating Ideas worksheet and from any additional brainstorming you might do; which “evidence” from the movie or tv show fits into subcategory 1, 2, and so forth?
3. Primary research / analysis: Make sure you address the subcategories in the same order when writing about the movie or tv show as you did when writing about what experts have to say about each subcategory. Each subcategory should include at least one paragraph, but might include two or three paragraphs in order to fully develop and support your thesis (in other words, you might need to find sub-subcategories ☺). You can work through the sections in any order, though at some point you’ll need to revise by reading from beginning to end to see whether the order of the parts makes sense.
4. Introduction: At some point, you will need to figure out a way into your paper (a way to frame your paper, to show that it says something important). Often, academic writing begins by pointing out
   1. something that is surprising
   2. a viewpoint that needs to be corrected
   3. a tension or conflict between two seemingly valid ideas

For example, a paper on *Elf* might begin by pointing out that the movie is usually viewed as a light holiday comedy, but it actually has some substance when it comes to the way writing is portrayed. The introduction can create interest and provide a roadmap for your paper.

1. Conclusion: The frame you begin your paper with may also be used to end your paper. The conclusion often offers a brief recap and then answers the question “So what? Why should readers care and what should they do with what they’ve just read?”