**English 9 Honors Name:  
Mr. Fisher**

**Essay Structural Terms**

Introduction: Sometimes, when I write comments on your essays, I think to myself, “I wonder if [Student X] even understands what I mean by [Generic Writing Comment].” Most likely, the answer is “no,” though that is because Student X, my originally-designed student robot, never really worked as anything but a paperweight. Still, there may never be a better paperweight than Student X. That robot could sure stop paper from blowing away! But I digress…what I am trying to say is that sometimes, I don’t think my students understand me. Many of you are reading this paragraph right now and thinking to yourself, “How am I supposed to understand you, Mr. Fisher, when you are clearly in need of psychiatric assistance. Student X, the student robot/paperweight? C’mon, you need help!” Meanwhile, I am thinking to myself, “Maybe I just need to create a common language to use when discussing essays?” while completely ignoring my students’ understandable concern for my overall mental health. Anyway, here are some terms that I plan on using to describe the structure of a thesis essay:

1. **Essay Question:** The prompt given to a student by his or her teacher that he or she must address in the form of an essay.

***e.g.*** *Do you think Mr. Fisher needs psychiatric assistance? Why or why not?*

2. **Thesis Statement:** A statement of opinion that should directly answer the essay question AND contain the essay writer’s developmental supports.

***e.g.*** *Mr. Fisher needs psychiatric assistance because he talks to himself, he writes bizarre assignment sheets, and he seems to be oddly obsessed with corduroy.*

3. **Developmental Supports (DS):** The reasons for the opinion stated in the thesis statement. Each developmental support should be a topic for one of the essay’s body paragraphs.

***e.g.*** *Mr. Fisher needs psychiatric assistance because he talks to himself, he writes bizarre assignment sheets, and he seems to be oddly obsessed with corduroy.*

4. **General Introductory Statement:** A method of starting an essay where the writer addresses the overall topic of the essay in a broad manner.

***e.g.*** *Every year, more and more high school English teachers check themselves into psychiatric clinics, often due to the stress they endure when grading student essays.*

5. **Complete Identification (CI):** Simply stating the title and author of a work of literature on which a literary essay focuses.

***e.g.*** *In the biography, The Matthew Fisher Story: a Tale of a Crazy English Teacher* *by Bob Dylan…*

6. **Topic Sentence (TS):** The first sentence of a body paragraph that should combine both the thesis and one of the developmental supports.

***e.g.*** *Additionally, Mr. Fisher should seek psychiatric help because writes bizarre assignment sheets that often frighten his worried English students.*

7. **Developmental Detail (DD):** Either an example or quotation from a novel or other source that serves as evidence that supports the writer’s thesis.

***e.g.*** *For instance, on one assignment sheet, Mr. Fisher wrote about a robot he falsely claimed to have created that he now successfully uses as a paperweight.*

8. **Direct Quotation (DQ):** The exact words that are taken directly from a novel or other source that serves as a Developmental Detail.

***e.g.*** *On one assignment sheet Mr. Fisher handed out to his students, he wrote, “…Student X, my*

*originally-designed student robot, never really worked as anything but a paperweight” (11).*

9. **In-text Citation:** The parenthetical object located after a quotation or paraphrased idea that credits the quotation or idea’s original source. When quoting a single novel or book throughout the essay, an in-text citation should only include the page numbers (from the appropriate source) between a set of parentheses.

***e.g.*** *On one assignment sheet Mr. Fisher handed out to his students, he wrote, “…Student X, my*

*originally-designed student robot, never really worked as anything but a paperweight” (11).*

10. **Lead In:** The words before the quotation that explain the context and speaker of the quotation.

***e.g.*** *On one assignment sheet Mr. Fisher handed out to his students, he wrote, “…Student X, my*

*originally-designed student robot, never really worked as anything but a paperweight” (11).*

11. **Interpretation:** An explanation of the quotation’s meaning, and any additional context that needs to be added to fully understand this meaning. It comes directly after the quotation.

***e.g.*** *Mr. Fisher wrote on this assignment sheet about a “student robot” that he now uses as a paperweight. Not only did he not create this “student robot,” but in fact, Mr. Fisher has never even attempted to build a robot. Furthermore, this false admission occurred on a handout about thesis essay terminology.*

12. **Analysis:** The sentence(s) that connect the Developmental Detail to the Developmental Support and the Thesis Statement.

***e.g.*** *The fact that Mr. Fisher would tell an obvious falsehood on an assignment sheet that has absolutely nothing to do with the actual assignment proves that, at the very least, he writes bizarre handouts. This tendency acts as one of many signs that point to Mr. Fisher’s need for psychiatric assistance.*