

Ambition Essay Support

Prompt: Although ambition can be a good thing, too much ambition can be harmful to both the ambitious individual and to others. Write an essay explaining the harmful effects of excessive ambition.

Note: Remember, you MUST use Shakespeare's *Macbeth* to support your claim/thesis which is pretty much already given to you in the prompt. You must also use one other example (historical, pop cultural, personal, or another literary).

When you reword the prompt, be careful not to use the exact same wording as the prompt. HINT: edit the word "thing."

Introduction: You have some creative freedom here, but you should build the paragraph to your thesis statement (which is basically a rewording of the prompt in this case). The thesis should be the last sentence of the introduction.

Body: This is where you will fully support/prove your thesis. It is the most important part of your essay! See the following example:

In William Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, the protagonist's lust for power ultimately leads to his fall from grace. In Act I, Macbeth shows his ambitious nature when he asides, "The Prince of Cumberland! That is a step/ On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,/ For in my way it lies" (iv, 48-50). Here, Macbeth is considering what he may have to do in order to become king now that Malcolm has been named King Duncan's successor. It is not enough for Macbeth that he has just been named the Thane of Cawdor; now, he desires full authority, just as the three witches have predicted. Later in the play, Macbeth no longer needs his wife's inciting to do terrible deeds in the name of power. He orders the murders of Banquo and Fleance, and then the entire Macduff family all on his own accord. He will do anything to stay in power, and ultimately, all his former allies turn against him. Finally, at the play's end, Macbeth faces an uprising and literally loses his head at the hands of the vengeful Macduff. His hunger for power and excessive ambition ends up getting Macbeth killed. Had he been content to be the Thane of Cawdor and not thirsted for more and more power, he may have lived a long and successful life, but instead, he lost everything, including his wife and the respect of others. Macbeth is the perfect example of excessive ambition leading to destruction.

Please note the color coding:

The topic sentence is in green. This sentence is NOT a plot detail, and it gives the reader an idea of the focus of the entire paragraph. It gives the title, author, and genre of the piece of literature being discussed in the paragraph AND relates closely to my thesis/claim.

These sentences provide very specific, concrete details from the text.

Concrete details are followed by these sentences that provide elaboration and commentary relating the detail and the thesis or offering further explanation.

In purple, I have interparagraph transition sentences or phrases. This paragraph shows the progression of Macbeth's ambition throughout the play, so I need a couple of transitions even inside my paragraph.

Finally, I have a concluding sentence that ties it all together and reminds the reader of my thesis/claim.

Did you count the number of sentences in this paragraph? There are eleven.

Remember, at this level, body paragraphs do not have a set number of sentences. The length of your body paragraphs should be determined by the development of your main idea. It should have a topic sentence, specific support, elaboration/commentary, more support, more elaboration, and a conclusion (sentence number varies depending on how much support and elaboration you use).

Conclusion: Wrap it up and hit the universal or AH HA! Why should everyone care about excessive ambition? Again, you have more creative freedom here, but should be sure to leave a lasting impression.

Need Grammar help? See the support links on my website.

Reminders:

- When you write about literature, stay in the 3rd person, present tense.
- Vary your sentence beginnings!
- Incorporate quotations into your sentences - NO QUOTE BOMBS!
- Punctuate quotations correctly.
- When quoting a play, give the Act, scene, and line numbers. Page numbers are irrelevant. Cite the quote like this: (II, iii, 30-34).
- If you find you're saying the same words over and over, use a thesaurus! Use new and interesting words!
- No run ons or fragments.
- Read your writing out loud to find awkward phrases and revise them.
- PROOFREAD!!!!