**Menu of Required Essay Elements**

**Template:**

**Introduction**

**A.** Provide necessary background information to clearly understand all of the components of the forthcoming thesis, such as relevant authors, titles, terminologies, and ideas.

**B.** State thesis using specific and meaningful words, expressing original ideas that not only respond to all aspects of the prompt but also pass the “So-what?” test.

**Body Paragraph**

**C.** State topic sentence that expresses the paragraph’s main idea using specific and purposeful wording, focusing on ideas directly related to a unique aspect of the thesis statement.

**D.** Establish context for evidence.

**--.** Integrate evidence into the essay’s prose by either using . . .

**E1**. Tag phrase

**E2**. Blend

**F.** Cite all evidence using MLA parenthetical citations.

**G.** Analyze evidence, focusing on key words and phrases in the excerpt, attributing meaning, and logically connecting that meaning to the key words and ideas of the topic sentence and thesis.

**Conclusion**

**H.** Tie key evidence and ideas from body paragraphs back to the thesis.

**I.** Express the relevancy of the thesis, making it clear to the reader why the thesis and its supporting evidence matter.

**Language, Mechanics and Formal Writing Conventions**

**J**. Use only third person pronouns in the essay’s text, avoiding first and second-person pronouns.

**K.** Transitional words and phrases must be used to bridge from one topic, character, story, etc. to another.

**L.** Literary present tense must be used throughout.

**M.** Avoid contractions.

**N.** Avoid words and phrases that take the place of specific meaningful words and phrases like “this,” “how,” “what,” etc. . .

**O.** Avoid “backstage language” like quote, textual evidence, thesis, essay, page, etc. . .

**P**. Use MLA formatting (1-inch margins, double-spaced, size 12 font, Times New Roman, parenthetical citations, centered title, heading in upper left-hand corner . . . )

Q. Use proper punctuation, spelling and capitalization.