

## Write Essays That Hook Readers from Start to Finish

### Exemplar: "The Hidden Cost of Fast Fashion"

### \*\*1. The Attention-Grabbing Opening\*\*

- A striking statistic or fact about fast fashion
- A vivid description of a clothing factory
- A personal anecdote related to clothing consumption

### \*\*Exemplars:\*\*

1. "In the time it takes you to read this sentence, over 2,000 items of clothing will have been thrown away in the United States alone. The true cost of that \$5 t-shirt? It might just be our planet's future."
2. "The air is thick with lint and the acrid smell of chemicals. Rows upon rows of hunched figures hunch over sewing machines, their fingers moving at inhuman speeds. This is the birthplace of your favourite bargain find – but at what cost?"
3. "I stood before my bursting closet, surrounded by a sea of discarded outfits. As I held up yet another barely-worn dress destined for the donation pile, a sobering thought struck me: I was part of a global problem that extended far beyond my bedroom walls."

### \*\*2. The Compelling Thesis\*\*

- Clear statement of the essay's main argument
- Brief overview of key points to be discussed
- A hint at the broader implications of the topic

### \*\*Exemplars:\*\*

1. "The fast fashion industry, while providing affordable clothing options, comes with a devastating environmental and human cost that far outweighs its perceived benefits. This essay will explore the environmental degradation, labour exploitation, and cultural shifts caused by our insatiable appetite for cheap, trendy clothing."
2. "By examining the supply chain of fast fashion, from raw material production to disposal, we can unveil the hidden costs of our throwaway culture. This analysis will demonstrate that the true price of fast fashion is paid not just by consumers, but by exploited workers and our planet's ecosystems."
3. "The fast fashion model is unsustainable and ethically bankrupt. Through an exploration of its economic, social, and environmental impacts, this essay will argue for a radical reimagining of our relationship with clothing and a shift towards more sustainable and ethical fashion practices."

### **\*\*3. The Engaging Body Paragraphs\*\***

- Well-researched facts and statistics
- Compelling examples and case studies
- Smooth transitions between ideas

#### **\*\*Exemplars:\*\***

1. "The environmental impact of fast fashion is staggering. According to the United Nations, the fashion industry produces 20% of global wastewater and 10% of global carbon emissions – more than all international flights and maritime shipping combined. A single cotton shirt requires 2,700 litres of water to produce, equivalent to what an average person drinks in 2.5 years."

2. "Behind the glossy facades of high street stores lies a dark reality of labour exploitation. In 2013, the collapse of the Rana Plaza factory in Bangladesh killed over 1,100 garment workers and injured 2,500 more. This tragedy brought global attention to the dangerous working conditions and poverty wages endemic in the fast fashion supply chain. Despite promises of reform, a 2018 report by the Global Labour Justice found that female garment workers in Asia face routine abuse, violence, and sexual harassment."

3. "The cultural impact of fast fashion extends beyond environmental and labour concerns. The constant churn of trends has created a 'throwaway' mentality towards clothing. A study by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation found that the average number of times a garment is worn before being discarded has decreased by 36% compared to 15 years ago. This shift not only contributes to environmental waste but also devalues the craftsmanship and artistry of clothing production."

### **\*\*4. The Counterargument and Rebuttal\*\***

- Acknowledgment of opposing viewpoints
- Respectful but firm rebuttal
- Reinforcement of the main thesis

#### **\*\*Exemplars:\*\***

1. "Proponents of fast fashion argue that it democratises style, allowing people of all income levels to participate in fashion trends. While this accessibility is valuable, it comes at too high a cost. The environmental and human rights violations perpetuated by the industry far outweigh the benefits of cheap, trendy clothing."

2. "Some contend that fast fashion provides crucial employment opportunities in developing countries. However, this argument fails to consider the quality of these jobs. Employment that endangers workers' lives and fails to provide a living wage is exploitation, not opportunity. Sustainable and ethical fashion can provide safer, more dignified employment while still meeting consumer demand."

3. "Critics may argue that sustainable fashion is too expensive for most consumers. However, this view is short-sighted. When we factor in the environmental clean-up costs, healthcare burdens, and long-term economic impacts of fast fashion, the true cost of that \$5 t-shirt becomes apparent. Investing in fewer, higher-quality garments is not only more ethical but often more economical in the long run."

#### **\*\*5. The Powerful Conclusion\*\***

- Recap of main points
- Call to action or thought-provoking final statement
- Linking back to the opening hook

#### **\*\*Exemplars:\*\***

1. "The hidden costs of fast fashion – environmental degradation, human exploitation, and cultural devaluation of clothing – are too high to ignore. As consumers, we have the power to demand change. Every purchase is a vote for the kind of world we want to live in. The next time you're tempted by that bargain find, remember: the cheapest clothes have always been paid for dearly."

2. "From the water-intensive cotton fields to the landfills overflowing with discarded garments, the fast fashion industry leaves a trail of destruction in its wake. But there is hope. By choosing quality over quantity, supporting ethical brands, and reimagining our relationship with clothing, we can weave a new narrative – one where style doesn't come at the cost of our planet or human dignity."

3. "As we stand before our bursting closets, surrounded by more clothes than previous generations could imagine, it's time to ask ourselves: at what cost? The true price of fast fashion is paid in contaminated waterways, exploited workers, and a culture of waste. But we have the power to change the pattern. By making conscious choices, we can transform the fashion industry from a source of pollution and exploitation to a force for positive change. The most stylish thing we can wear is responsibility."

#### **### Writing Prompt:**

Write a persuasive essay on a controversial topic of your choice. Your essay should include a compelling hook, a clear thesis statement, well-researched supporting paragraphs, a counterargument and rebuttal, and a powerful conclusion. Use at least five words from the vocabulary list in your essay.

#### **### Vocabulary List (20 words with meanings):**

1. Paradigm: A typical example or pattern of something
2. Ubiquitous: Present, appearing, or found everywhere
3. Dichotomy: A division or contrast between two things
4. Proliferation: Rapid increase in numbers
5. Pertinent: Relevant or applicable to a particular matter

6. Amalgamation: The action of combining or uniting
7. Nuanced: Characterised by subtle shades of meaning
8. Rhetoric: The art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing
9. Imperative: Of vital importance; crucial
10. Cogent: Clear, logical, and convincing
11. Implicit: Implied though not plainly expressed
12. Exacerbate: Make (a problem, bad situation, or negative feeling) worse
13. Pragmatic: Dealing with things sensibly and realistically
14. Ramification: A consequence of an action or event
15. Substantiate: Provide evidence to support or prove the truth of
16. Juxtapose: Place or deal with close together for contrasting effect
17. Empirical: Based on, concerned with, or verifiable by observation or experience
18. Paradigm shift: A fundamental change in approach or underlying assumptions
19. Ameliorate: Make (something bad or unsatisfactory) better
20. Efficacy: The ability to produce a desired or intended result

### ### Exemplar Essay: "The Double-Edged Sword of Social Media"

In the time it takes to read this sentence, over 500 hours of video will have been uploaded to YouTube, 695,000 stories shared on Instagram, and 500,000 tweets posted. The digital age has ushered in an era of unprecedented connectivity, with social media platforms becoming as ubiquitous as the air we breathe. Yet, as we find ourselves increasingly tethered to our screens, a pertinent question arises: Is this hyperconnected world bringing us closer together or driving us further apart?

The proliferation of social media has undeniably revolutionised how we communicate, share information, and perceive the world around us. Proponents argue that these platforms democratise information, give voice to the marginalised, and foster global communities. Indeed, the Arab Spring demonstrated the power of social media to catalyse real-world change, with platforms like Twitter and Facebook playing crucial roles in organising protests and disseminating information. Moreover, social media has become an invaluable tool for businesses, allowing for targeted marketing and direct customer engagement on a scale previously unimaginable.

However, the ramifications of our social media-saturated world extend far beyond these apparent benefits, often exacerbating societal issues in subtle yet profound ways. Studies have shown a strong correlation between heavy social media use and increased rates of depression, anxiety, and loneliness, particularly among younger users. The constant exposure to curated versions of others' lives can foster feelings of inadequacy and fear of missing out (FOMO). Furthermore, the echo chamber effect of personalised content algorithms can reinforce existing beliefs and biases, contributing to political polarisation and the spread of misinformation. A 2018 MIT study found that false news stories are 70% more likely to be retweeted than true stories, highlighting the dangerous efficacy of social media in propagating falsehoods.

Proponents of social media might argue that these platforms are merely tools, and any negative effects stem from misuse rather than inherent flaws. They contend that social

media's ability to connect people across vast distances and cultural divides outweighs its potential downsides. While this argument has merit, it fails to acknowledge the implicit design features of these platforms that encourage addictive behaviour and prioritise engagement over user well-being. The attention economy that underpins social media business models creates an imperative to keep users scrolling, often at the expense of meaningful interaction or personal growth.

As we stand at this digital crossroads, it's clear that a paradigm shift in our approach to social media is necessary. Rather than viewing these platforms through a simplistic dichotomy of good or bad, we must adopt a more nuanced understanding of their impact on our lives and society as a whole. This requires a pragmatic approach: implementing stronger regulations to protect user privacy and combat misinformation, designing platforms with user well-being in mind, and educating individuals on healthy digital habits. By juxtaposing the benefits of connectivity with the need for genuine human interaction, we can work towards an amalgamation of the digital and physical worlds that enhances rather than diminishes our human experience. The power to ameliorate the negative aspects of social media lies in our hands – as users, developers, and policymakers. In doing so, we can harness the true potential of these platforms to bring us closer together, both online and in the real world.