

Quote: What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, American writer and philosopher

Step 1: Write an occasion/position topic sentence.

Step 2: Insert quote AND identify author.

Step 3: Write body sentences.

Option 1: Select one idea and develop it using well-developed examples, stories, or details.

Step 4: Write a clincher that...

- explains the lesson, moral or significance
- discusses short or long term consequences
- gives a call for action

While many believe that opportunities and social class are what contribute most in life, true success relies on a person's character. American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson recognized this when he wrote, "What lies behind us and lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us." This quote has proven true for many people. For example, Oprah Winfrey, America's queen of daytime talk shows, was born to an unwed teenage mother. She spent her childhood in poverty and has unabashedly described years of sexual abuse and teenage larks where she ran wild. However, this woman, who has provided inspiration to so many people through the honesty of her talk show and who has given millions of her own money to build schools to educate children in Africa, serves as a living testament to the power of positive thinking and the personal drive for success. If Oprah Winfrey can be considered one of America's most powerful and influential women, high school students today can find inspiration in Winfrey's life. Poor grades as a freshman do not need to translate into poor grades throughout high school. Being raised in a home with no money does not necessarily translate into a lifetime of poverty. The desire that burns within an individual can fuel the flames of success. Just as Oprah Winfrey rose from the pits of poverty to personal triumph by relying on her strong communication skills and her love of humanity, others too can draw upon their inner selves to soar like eagles.