**Question**

What is the number one reason that students drop out during or after the first year of college? Reading. The research indicates that the amount and difficulty of reading is so far beyond what many young adults are expecting, they are overwhelmed to the point of giving up. So to teach someone to read, and to nurture that skill into a love of reading, is truly a gift. It was my grandma who gave me that gift, along with many other valuable life lessons. For teaching me to love reading, to value education, and to be a good parent, my grandmother is the most influential person in my life.

***Starts with broad / general statement (or question)***

***Becomes more specific, introduces subject, gradually narrows focus***

***Finally comes to the “point”, which is the Thesis statement.***

**Definition**

***Contains “own words” definition that is related to the main idea of the essay***

***Introduces subject in the middle***

***Thesis names subject, uses a superlative, lists 3 reasons that will be explored in the paper***

Influence can mean different things to different people, and it can be positive or negative. To me, it means shaping someone’s behavior, and when I think of my grandmother, it definitely holds a positive meaning. For as long as I can remember, my grandmother has been a strong presence in my life, guiding me with her advice, hugs, and gentle correction. My grandma is the most influential person in my life because she raised me, because I am so much like her, and because of her high expectations for me.

**Question (or Scenario)**

***Starts with a question that is also posing a situation that the reader can identify with***

***Contains counter-argument because it states what most people would say, then says that this paper will not be typical***

***Lists 3 reasons first, then names subject and uses superlative***

When asked, “Who has been the most influential person in your life?” it is often quite simple, right? Many would answer Mom, Dad, or any other relative who gave advice or guidance, and there is nothing wrong with that. These are important people that we love and admire, and it makes sense that they will shape who we become as we grow and learn. However, for me, the answer is quite different. The person who has most impacted my life is no relative at all, but a fellow student. I have known her since fifth grade, and she has always influenced me to be a better person. Because of her achievements, her leadership, and her kindness, my friend Amy Hall is the most influential person in my life.

**Scenario**

Imagine the look on the woman’s face when she asked the Friend of the Court representative what would happen if she did not take custody of the baby. As much as she loved the granddaughter, she knew that her son and his soon-to-be ex-wife could be good parents if only they would grow up and take responsibility for their child. So she wanted to know, what would happen if she didn’t take the baby home with her from the courthouse that day…but the grandmother was bluffing. The Friend of the Court representative looked her in the eye across the table and said, “The baby will be in foster care by the end of the day, and will be moved to a new foster home every three months until the baby’s parents can prove they are ready, willing, and able to care for her properly.” Without missing a beat, the grandmother reached for the diaper bag with one hand and a pen with the other hand, and she said, “Where do I sign?” and she turned to her husband and said “C’mon, Clair, let’s take this baby home.” The baby was me, and the grandmother was mine, and that was 40 years ago. Thank God for small favors. In the years that followed, she became the biggest influence in my life by raising me as if I were her own, passing on to me many of her habits and ways of thinking, and holding me to high expectations.

***“Narrative” scenario – tells a story***

***Tells a story in the 3rd person, leads into thesis***

***After developing the 3 reasons in the body paragraphs, the writer could resume the narrative in the conclusion, telling whatever happened to the grandmother, etc. The power of this style is in its “pathos,” or emotional appeal.***