



# CHAPTER 06

*the act of writing | develop it!*

Having reviewed the **PARTS OF SPEECH** and explained what **THESIS**, **IMAGE** and **EVIDENCE** are, you are now ready to write your next essay. First, you will need to select a thesis and ask yourself our signature question—“**Why am I writing this essay?**” Having answered this question for yourself, you are now ready to write, but how will you **DEVELOP** your essay? That’s the question, and here is the answer. Let’s call these the **PARTS OF AN ESSAY**. You will follow these steps:

## PARTS OF AN ESSAY: STEPS FOR DEVELOPING YOUR ESSAY

Step 1—Present your thesis

Step 2—Present examples as evidence that *prove* your thesis

Step 3—Discuss the evidence

Step 4—Discuss *how* the evidence proves your thesis

Step 5—Move on to further develop your evidence

or

Present new evidence

These are the steps for developing your essay. We’ll now put them into practice, so you can see how they work together. Let’s begin with the following thesis:



## Step 1: Present Your Thesis

*Jack London saw the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake as a force of nature more powerful than mankind and civilization.*

You can't just make a statement like this and expect your reader to believe you. You have to prove it. How do you prove it? You prove it with **EXAMPLES** that you use as **EVIDENCE** that prove your thesis. Where do you get examples? You get examples from inside the essay or the books you're writing about, or you get them from the real world that you're writing about. You could take the following **EXAMPLE** from Jack London's essay: "The earthquake shook down in San Francisco hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of walls and chimneys," and use it as **EVIDENCE** to **PROVE** your thesis.

## Step 2: Present Examples As Evidence That Prove Your Thesis

Jack London saw the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake as a force of nature more powerful than mankind and civilization. In his essay "The Story of an Eyewitness: The San Francisco Earthquake," Jack London writes, "The earthquake shook down in San Francisco hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of walls and chimneys."

You have found a good quote—an example (in red)—from Jack London's essay to prove your thesis. Now, you want to *discuss* that example in your own terms.

## Step 3: Discuss the Evidence

Jack London saw the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake as a force of nature more powerful than mankind and civilization. In his essay "The Story of an Eyewitness: The San Francisco Earthquake," Jack London writes, "The earthquake shook down in San Francisco hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of walls and chimneys." Jack London thought of himself as an "Eyewitness," someone who saw this devastation.

Now, you're going to discuss *how* this example provides evidence of your thesis. Remember, the thesis is: *Jack London saw the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake as a force of nature more powerful than mankind and civilization.*

## Step 4: Discuss How the Evidence Proves Your Thesis

Jack London saw the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake as a force of nature more powerful than mankind and civilization. In his essay “The Story of an Eyewitness: The San Francisco Earthquake,” Jack London writes, “The earthquake shook down in San Francisco hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of walls and chimneys.” Jack London thought of himself as an “Eyewitness,” someone who saw this devastation. *An earthquake comes not on mankind’s schedule, but on its own schedule. It strikes not where mankind decides it should strike but wherever it happens to come. It can destroy all that mankind has built up: walls, chimneys, whatever happens to be caught in its circle.*

Now, you can move on to offer another **EXAMPLE** as further **EVIDENCE** of your **THESIS**. Remember, again, that your **THESIS** is: *Jack London saw the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake as a force of nature more powerful than mankind and civilization.*

## Step 5. Move on to Further Develop Your Evidence *or* Present New Evidence

Jack London saw the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake as a force of nature more powerful than mankind and civilization. In his essay “The Story of an Eyewitness: The San Francisco Earthquake,” Jack London writes, “The earthquake shook down in San Francisco hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of walls and chimneys.” Jack London thought of himself as an “Eyewitness,” someone who saw this devastation. *An earthquake comes not on mankind’s schedule, but on its own schedule. It strikes not where mankind decides it should strike but wherever it happens to be. It can destroy all that mankind has built up: walls, chimneys, whatever happens to be caught in its circle.*

In “The Story of an Eyewitness: The San Francisco Earthquake,” London goes on to say that “Not in history has a modern imperial city been so completely destroyed. San Francisco is gone.” London has seen his own city razed to the ground. By 1906, San Francisco was a powerful, important city that had been built up over the last hundred years. But nature was more powerful. It could destroy an entire city, a whole development mankind had worked over a long time to build.

Now, we know the steps that go into developing an essay. You don’t want to just throw a lot of ideas down in your essay. You want to organize them, so they *develop* your **THESIS**, so that they *prove* your **THESIS**, so that your reader can see what you want to say. And that’s what it’s all about, isn’t it?

You are using language to say what you have to say, to break the silence of your own life. You want the reader to understand what you want to say.

Let's use our method to write an essay where your **THESIS** is not about something you've read but about your life. The **EXAMPLES** you use as **EVIDENCE** to *prove* your **THESIS** will come from your life. Let's just call this essay, "I Want to Run for Public Office."

### Step 1: Present Your Thesis

*I want to run for public office because I want to help change our society as I saw my mother do.*

### Step 2: Present Examples As Evidence That *Prove* Your Thesis

I want to run for public office because I want to help change our society as I saw my mother do. I come from a family with a history of strong political involvement. The inhabitants of the small town I come from in Pennsylvania included Native Americans, African Americans, and other multi-cultural immigrants, my Irish family among them. Those communities were involved in both the Republican and Democratic parties, but my family was strongly Democratic. *My mother was Commissioner of the School Board and then Mayor.*

### Step 3: Discuss the Evidence

I want to run for public office because I want to help change our society as I saw my mother do. I come from a family with a history of strong political involvement. The inhabitants of the small town I come from in Pennsylvania included Native Americans, African Americans, and other multi-cultural immigrants, my Irish family among them. Those communities were involved in both the Republican and Democratic parties, but my family was strongly Democratic. My mother was Commissioner of the School Board and then Mayor.

*My mother began her political career when she ran for the School Board of our town. She wanted to improve the education we were getting as kids. By the time she became Commissioner of the School Board, she had begun changing our schools, bringing in art and music specialists, purchasing new technologies, inspiring worn-out teachers and administrators. During the Civil Rights era of the mid-'50s and '60s, my mother served as Mayor, dedicating herself to the fight for civil rights, inter-racial harmony, and universal equality.*

### Step 4: Discuss *How* the Evidence Proves Your Thesis

I want to run for public office because I want to help change our society as I saw my mother do. I come from a family with a history of strong political involvement. The inhabitants of the small town I come from in Pennsylvania included Native Americans, African Americans, and other multi-cultural immigrants, my Irish family among them. Those communities were

involved in both the Republican and Democratic parties, but my family was strongly Democratic. My mother was Commissioner of the School Board and then Mayor.

My mother began her political career when she ran for the School Board of our town. She wanted to improve the education we were getting as kids. By the time she became Commissioner of the School Board, she had begun changing our schools, bringing in art and music specialists, purchasing new technologies, inspiring worn-out teachers and administrators. During the Civil Rights era of the mid-'50s and 60s my mother served as Mayor, dedicating herself to the fight for civil rights, inter-racial harmony, and universal equality.

All the time I was growing up, we had meetings, gatherings, and parties at our house with all the politically involved people in our town. Soon, we also had State officials coming over. Eventually, national political figures joined those events. At first, I listened in on all the conversations, which fascinated me. After a while, I felt sure enough of myself to join the conversations, expressing my own opinions. People listened to me. Not only did they listen to me, they thought my ideas were interesting. *This made me feel so good that I wanted to keep up this activity after I left home. I joined the student Democratic Club when I came to college. Now, I want to keep going. Someday, I will run for public office myself. Who knows, I could be the Governor of Pennsylvania. I could be a Senator from Pennsylvania. Why be shy? I could be President of the United States!*

### **Step 5: Move On To Further Develop Your Evidence Or Present New Evidence**

I want to run for public office because I want to help change our society as I saw my mother do. I come from a family with a history of strong political involvement. The inhabitants of the small town I come from in Pennsylvania included Native Americans, African Americans, and other multi-cultural immigrants, my Irish family among them. Those communities were involved in both the Republican and Democratic parties, but my family was strongly Democratic. My mother was Commissioner of the School Board and then Mayor.

My mother began her political career when she ran for the School Board of our town. She wanted to improve the education we were getting as kids. By the time she became Commissioner of the School Board, she had begun changing our schools, bringing in art and music specialists, purchasing new technologies, inspiring worn-out teachers and administrators. During the Civil Rights era of the mid-'50s and 60s my mother served as Mayor, dedicating herself to the fight for civil rights, inter-racial harmony, and universal equality.

All the time I was growing up, we had meetings, gatherings, and parties at our house with all the politically involved people in our town. Soon, we also had State officials coming over. Eventually, national political figures joined those events. At first, I listened in on all the conversations, which fascinated me. After a while, I felt sure enough of myself to join the conversations, expressing my own opinions. People listened to me. Not only did they listen to

me, they thought my ideas were interesting. This made me feel so good that I wanted to keep up this activity after I left home. I joined the student Democratic Club when I came to college. Now, I want to keep going. Someday, I will run for public office myself. Who knows, I could be the Governor of Pennsylvania. I could be a Senator from Pennsylvania. Why be shy? I could be President of the United States!

I'm not always happy with Democratic Party policies, and yet they represent my ideas about politics better than the Republicans. While I agree with some Republican positions, I sometimes have ideas of my own that neither party subscribes to. *When I move up in the Democratic Party, and when I come to run for office myself, I hope to influence the Democratic Party with my ideas and to change it for the better.*

## Chapter Review: Essay Development

- Step 1. Present Your Thesis
- Step 2. Present Examples And Evidence To *Prove* Your Thesis
- Step 3. Discuss The Evidence
- Step 4. Discuss *How* The Evidence Proves Your Thesis
- Step 5. Move on to Further Develop Your Evidence  
or  
Present New Evidence

