# Format for Writing a Color-coded Paragraph

Topic Sentence (one sentence which states the main idea or purpose). Transition word or phrase; Reason/Fact/Detail (one sentence that states the first supporting detail for your main idea). Explanation/Quote/Example (one **or more** sentences that explain your first supporting detail). Transition word or phrase; Reason/Fact/Detail (one sentence that states the second supporting detail for your main idea). Explanation/Quote/Example (one **or more** sentences that explain your second supporting detail). Transition word or phrase; Reason/Fact/Detail (one sentence that states the third supporting detail for your main idea). Explanation/Quote/Example (one **or more** sentences that explain your third supporting detail). Transition word or phrase; Conclusion (one sentence that summarizes your main idea again).

Additional tips:

- Possible transition words include: first, second, third; one, another, last; etc.
- **Never** start a topic sentence with: "I am going to write about…", "This paragraph is about…", "The chapter talked about…" or anything remotely similar.  It is insulting to the reader.  *(Basically you are telling your reader that he/she is too stupid to figure it out. Not a good way to start a conversation if you want someone to listen to you, is it.)*
    - **Bad** Example:  I am going to tell you what caused the American Civil War.
    - **Good** Example:  There were many causes of the American Civil War.
- Facts, statistics, eyewitness accounts and first-hand knowledge are all good things to use in the explanation/quote/example sentences.  The more data that you have, the more persuasive you can be in your writing.
- When summarizing in your conclusion sentence, it is often useful to include your details
    - **Bad** Example:  That's why the war started.
    - **Good** Example: Disagreements over states' rights, slavery, and economics all contributed to the start of the American Civil War.
- It is a good idea to organize your ideas before starting to write.
    - Start with brainstorming words, phrases, and ideas that are associated with the topic
    - Next, use a graphic organizer to move the words into categories
    - Then you can begin your first draft.
- Make sure you re-read your paragraph and make any editing corrections that are necessary.
- **Always** turn in your best work!