The Reverse Outline:

An Exercise in Analysis

Today’s activity is an exercise in understanding how good argument are organized and built. To do this, follow the instructions below.

**Step 1) Go pick one!**

\*9/11: Provoked by the United States

\*The Impact of the Stonewall Riots on American Society and Politics

\*The Change in Chicano Culture

\*The Assassination of JFK

**Step 2) Find a partner—or two—that has the same paper**

**Step 3) Read (silently, or out loud)**

\*After each paragraph, stop and discuss its role and impact in the paper (see other side of this paper). The whole discussion should take approximately 30 minutes).

**Step 4) Distill**

As a pair, decide what the outline would look like here and draft a rough outline. Ask each other questions like:

\*How many pieces of evidence are being used per paragraph?

\*Does the evidence used truly fit the topic sentence?

\*How is this writer transitioning between ideas?

\*Is the author recognizing sources that don’t agree with the argument? If so, how is it being integrated?

Identifying the Role and Function

Each paragraph has a “job” to play, much like any organized item with multiple parts (a symphony) or an organization (a school). To fail to recognize those jobs leads to poor structure and sloppy transitions.

For each paragraph, please follow the guideline/example below:

“Physical problems associated with cell phone usage are beginning to be identified. Constant use of cell phones causes reduced cardiorespiratory fitness. A study published in the International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity concluded that high frequency users of cell phones tended to be less physically fit than low frequency users (Lepp et al. 7). High frequency users described how cell phones disrupted their physical activity behavior and consumed their time with cell phone facilitated sedentary behaviors such as playing applications, watching television, and checking social networking sites (Lepp et al. 7). Cell phone usage accompanies and is attributed to other sedentary behaviors, causing the high frequency users to lack in physically active behaviors, leading to detrimental health. Some may argue that cell phones allow people to connect with others, who can accompany them in physical activities, but these beneficial situations are outliers. Reduced testosterone and sperm count in men can be caused by cell phone usage. Cell phones emit Electro-Magnetic Frequencies or EMFs, and rats exposed to these EMFs had far less testosterone in their blood stream than those unexposed (Sellman). Men, that regularly carry their cell phones near their groin, could potentially have their sperm count reduced by as much as 30 percent (Sellman). Men often carry cell phones in their pockets, so the genitals are frequently exposed to the EMFs emitted by cell phones. These EMFs cause men to have reduced testosterone and sperm count, and over a lifetime these effects could easily become drastically more severe, if exposure is not reduced. EMFs are found in other electronic devices that are used frequently, but cell phones are the only devices used so frequently and stored next to sensitive areas. Cell phone usage can increase the potential chance of brain cancer. “Cell phone users were two and a half times more likely to have a temporal brain tumor on the side of the head where they held their phone. In the case of tumors of the auditory nerve, which connects the ear to the brain, the risk increased to more than three times for mobile phone users” (Sellman). It is clear that holding the cell phone next to your head allows EMFs to be exposed to the brain. The data suggests that these EMFs emitted by cell phones can be attributed to the increased potential of a brain tumor. These three physical problems associated with cell phone usage are very detrimental to human health.”

Topic Sentence:

Physical problems associated with cell phone usage are beginning to be identified.

Evidence Used:

1. A study published in the International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity concluded that high frequency users of cell phones tended to be less physically fit than low frequency users (Lepp et al. 7).
2. High frequency users described how cell phones disrupted their physical activity behavior and consumed their time with cell phone facilitated sedentary behaviors such as playing applications, watching television, and checking social networking sites (Lepp et al. 7).
3. Cell phones emit Electro-Magnetic Frequencies or EMFs, and rats exposed to these EMFs had far less testosterone in their blood stream than those unexposed (Sellman).
4. Men, that regularly carry their cell phones near their groin, could potentially have their sperm count reduced by as much as 30 percent (Sellman).
5. “Cell phone users were two and a half times more likely to have a temporal brain tumor on the side of the head where they held their phone. In the case of tumors of the auditory nerve, which connects the ear to the brain, the risk increased to more than three times for mobile phone users” (Sellman).

What is the point of this paragraph?

The author’s point here is to show the reader that cell phones pose physical threats to the user. The author tells the reader about serious health concerns, including diminished physical activity, lowered sperm count, and increased risk of brain cancer.

What is the role of this paragraph?

The role of this paragraph is to support the author’s thesis and main argument, which is that cell phones have impacted American society not just socially, but physically. It relies almost exclusively on the research the author has done and provides minimal analysis. This paragraph does not attempt to solve the problem, but is clearly providing the reader with adequate evidence to believe that cell phones HAVE, in fact, impacted consumers. This paragraph should be found in the early section of a research paper.