

Sample starter sentences I used in Principles of Economics

After we have just studied conservative, liberal and radical perspectives I give students the following template to fill in:

“Although I generally follow the _____ perspective [insert which perspective you favor overall], on the issue of _____ [insert the issue on which you hold a different viewpoint] I follow the _____ perspective because _____ [insert a brief description of the reason why you take this different viewpoint.]”

After we had just studied market versus non-market allocation of goods and services, I give students the following template to fill in:

“Although the allocation of _____ [describe your good or service] by _____ [describe the current allocation system] has the advantage(s) of _____, a _____ [describe your alternative allocation system] would be better because _____.”

After we have just studied tax incidence, I give students the following template to fill in:

“Although I generally favor a [progressive/regressive] tax system for the US, in the economic simulation, I chose a to make the _____ tax [insert a tax] [more/less] _____ [insert progressive or regressive] because _____.”

Results

1. Students were more successful when I asked them to submit a tentative thesis for my review before writing the essay.
2. Students were encouraged to write a second draft of each essay for an improved grade. Approximately one-half of all students did so, usually improving the quality of the essay significantly.
3. For the third essay, I asked students to compose their own “starter sentence” beginning with although.
4. In addition to instructions discussed in class, I distributed the following written directions:

Choose one economic issue with which you are familiar and for which your beliefs differ from your overall economic perspective. For example, you may agree with the radical or liberal belief on this particular issue even though you are generally conservative on most

other issues. Or, you may agree with the conservatives even though you are liberal or radical on most other issues.

Begin your essay with the following thesis placed either at the very beginning or somewhere within the first paragraph:

Although I generally follow the _____ perspective [insert which perspective you favor overall], on the issue of _____ [insert the issue on which you hold a different viewpoint] I follow the _____ perspective because _____ [insert a brief description of the reason why you take this different viewpoint.]

In your essay, explain to me, the reader, why you depart from your overall perspective on this particular issue. Make certain that you explain why someone might expect you to hold a different viewpoint on this issue based on your overall perspective, and what is different about this issue, but not other issues, causing you to follow a different perspective's recommendation.