# OCIE: Observe, Connect, Interpret, Evaluate,
## Or How to Develop Your Ideas

By now you have probably heard a number of times either from me or your other teachers that you need to develop you ideas more. Simply stating something is not enough. Stating it and adding an example or quotation doesn't do either. So, what to do then? How can one write a whole paragraph on one idea? And what could one possibly say?

It's easier than you think.

O - First, you should tell your reader in simple but clear and interesting way what your idea/argument is. You state it. By doing that, you inform your reader about the topic of the following paragraph. That's why some people call this first sentence a topic sentence. Another way to refer to what you are doing here is to say that you are making an observation. You point something out to your reader that she might not have been thinking of before she read your paper. So that's the O of the OCIE.

C - Stands for "Connect." After you have made an observation to your reader (topic sentence), you should illustrate with an example what you meant by the previous statement. Make a connection to your observation from a specific text that helps your reader understand what you meant by the observation.

I - Stands for "Interpret." Read over your observation and your connection. Tell the reader how these two work together, what they mean to you, where they apply, or other things that will help the reader understand how they relate to each other. Without your interpretation you would leave it up to your reader to figure out what you mean. That's your job, however. Make explicit how your example illustrates your observation.

E - Should sum up the OCI-part. Read over everything you have written so far and ask yourself what it means as a whole. Evaluate it. In the OCI-part you have developed one argument or point that you have made to support the thesis of the paper. The E-part should explicit to your reader how OCI relates to your thesis. Again, don't let your reader guess what you are trying to say. Instead, say it.