

SOC 776

WRITING SOCIOLOGY

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Room 3.59

Consultation Hours:

Tuesdays 14.00-15.00

or by appointment

WRITING AN EXPOSITORY ESSAY

- A clear, concise and defined **thesis statement** that occurs in the first paragraph of the essay.
- **Clear and logical transitions** between the introduction, body and conclusion
- **Body paragraphs** with evidential support (whether factual, logical, statistical, or anecdotal)
- **A conclusion** that does not simply restate the thesis, but readdresses it in light of the evidence provided
- **CREATIVITY!**



Mind Mapping

- Choose a topic that you want to write.
- Develop the topic into sub-topics.
- Use questions to develop the topic.

Example

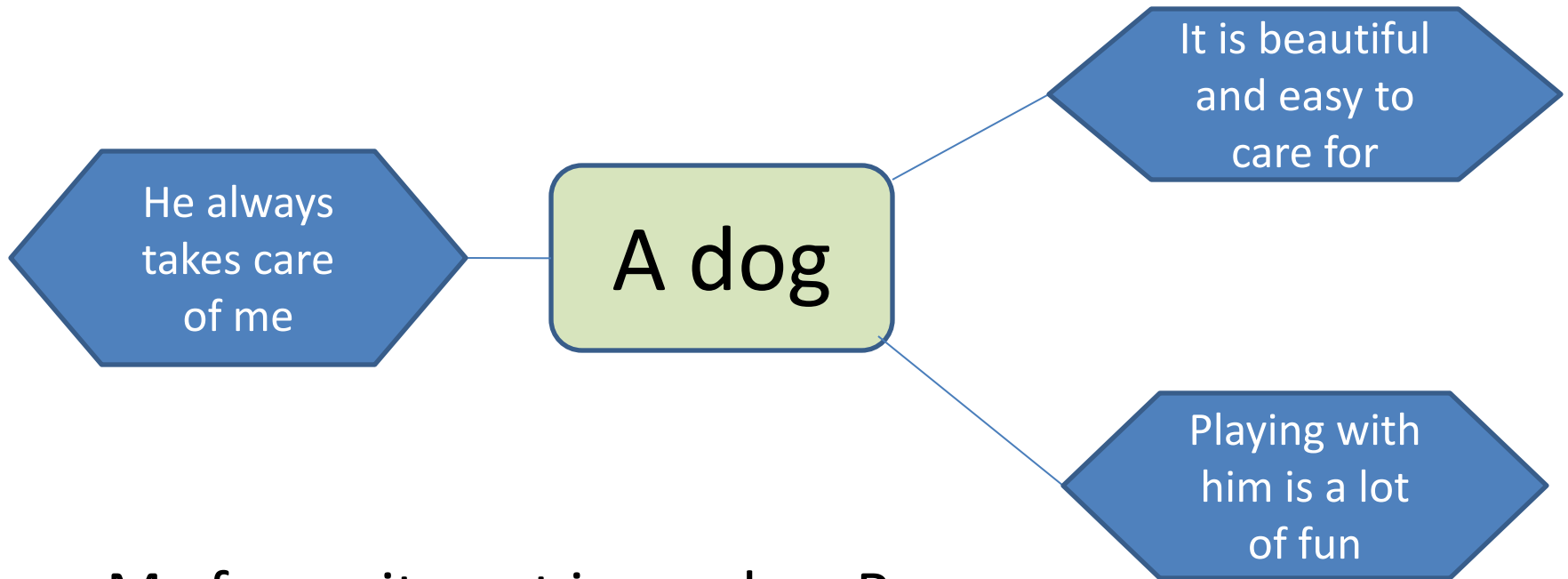
- What is your favorite pet?

A dog

- My favourite pet is my dog, Romeo.

How to make sub-topics?

- Use question.
- Why do you like your pet?



- My favourite pet is my dog, Romeo.

Write the Introductory Paragraph

- Introduction or Topic Sentence
(Use key words from the prompt)
- First Subtopic (A "Showing" Example)
- Second Subtopic (A "Showing" Example)
- Third Subtopic (A "Showing" Example)
- Conclusion (Restates Introduction)

How to write conclusion?

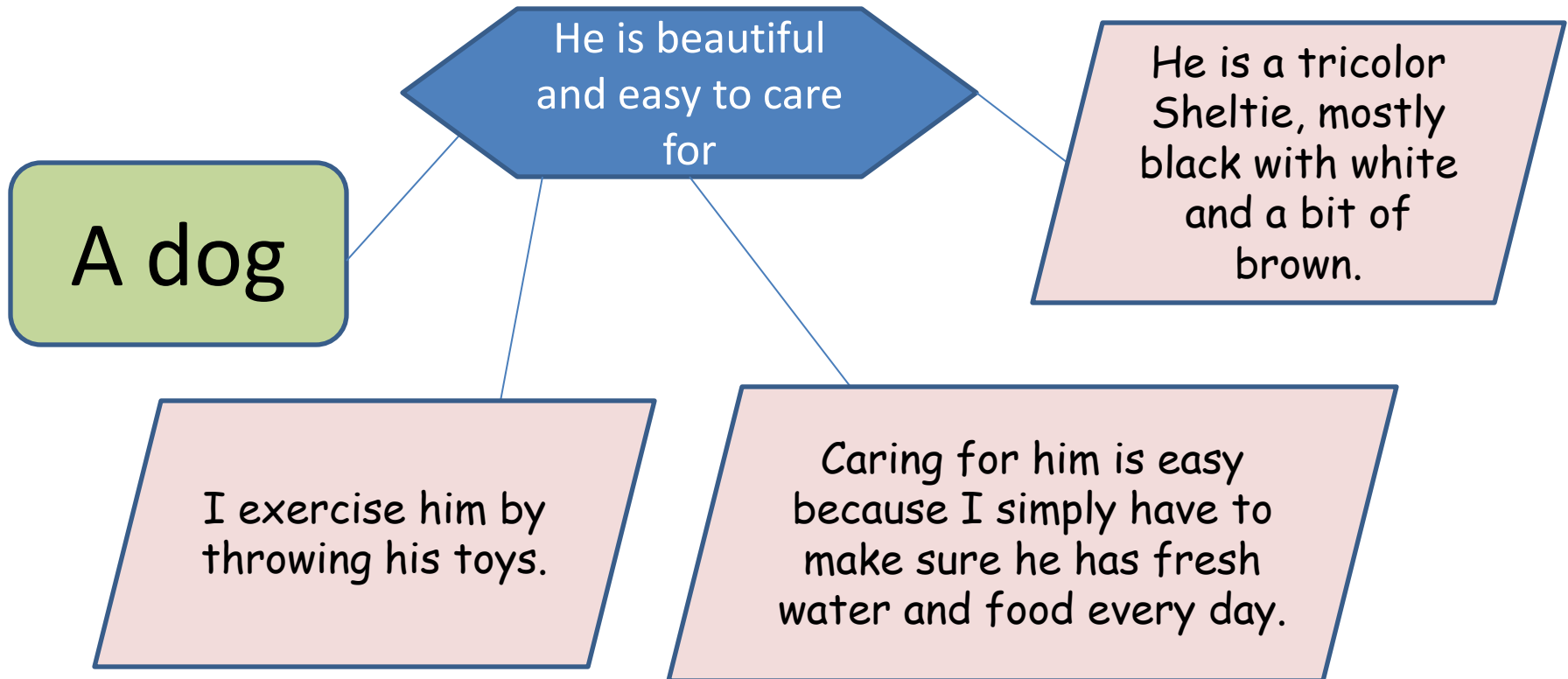
- Paraphrase the topic sentence. (Write the sentence in different words without changing the meaning)
- For Example:
 - *My favorite pet is my dog, Romeo.*
- Change into:
 - *I have never had a better pet.*

Paragraph 1: Introductory Paragraph

My favorite pet is my dog, Romeo. He is beautiful and easy to care for. Playing with him is lots of fun. He always takes care of me. I have never had a better pet.

How to make the body text paragraph?

- Make another question for paragraph 2.
- Why is your pet beautiful and easy to care for?

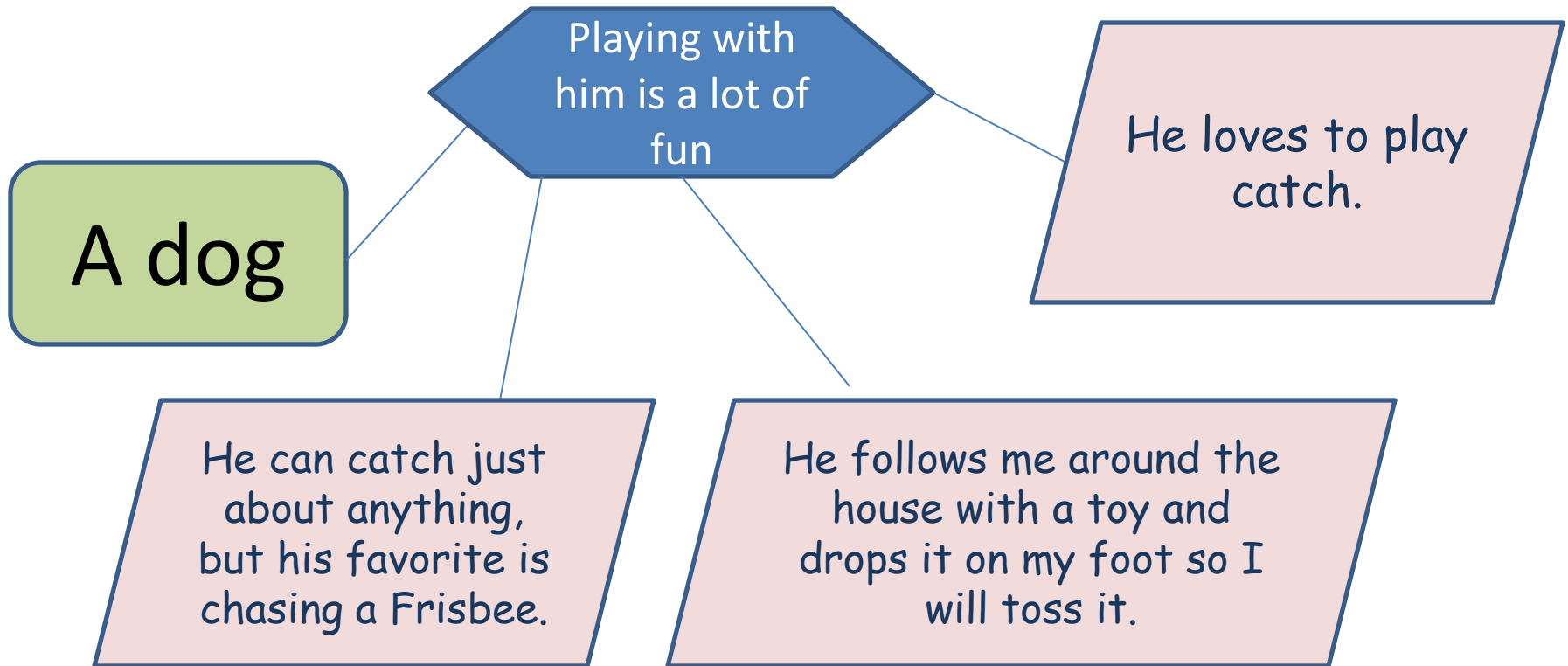


Write Paragraph 2

Romeo is beautiful and easy to care for. He is a tricolor Sheltie, mostly black with white and a bit of brown. Caring for him is easy because I simply have to make sure he has fresh water and food every day. I exercise him by throwing his toys. Because he is good looking and doesn't require much care Romeo is a good pet.

Make another question for paragraph 3

- Why is playing with him a lot of fun?

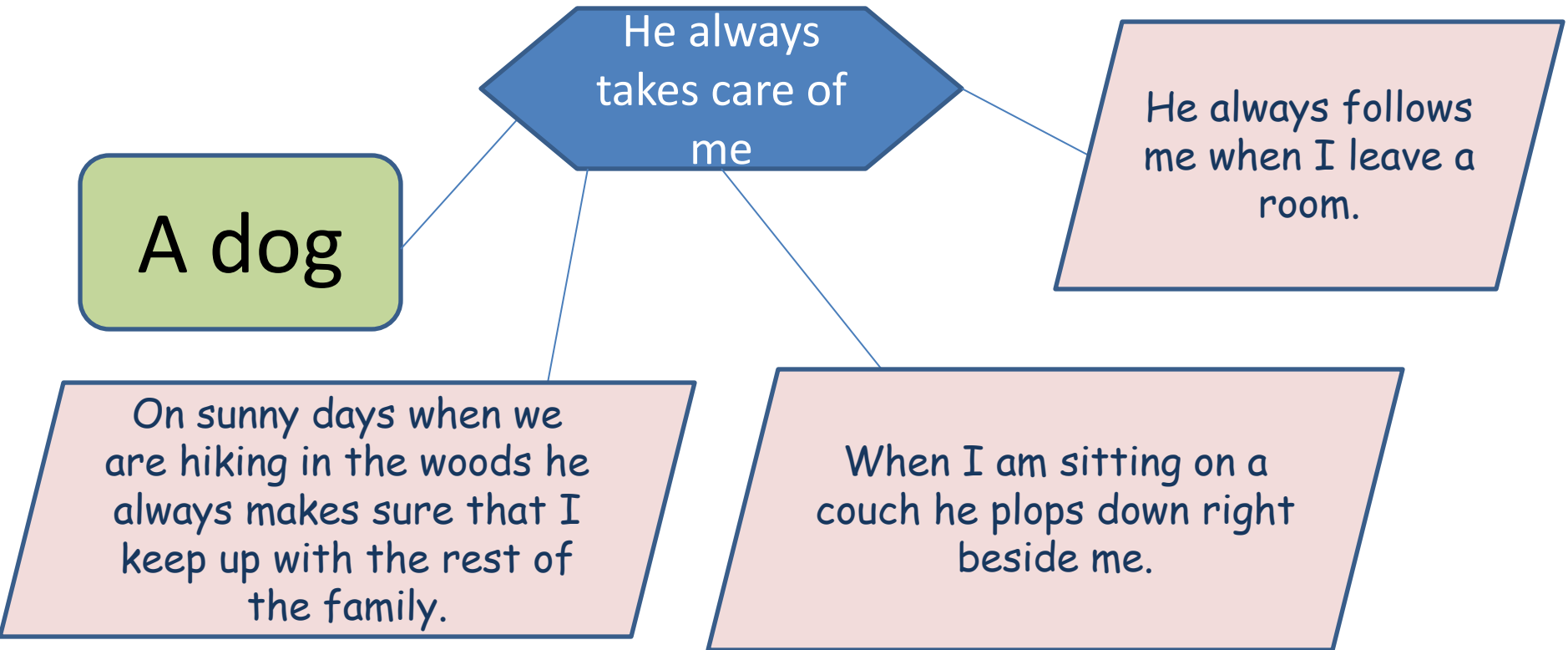


Write Paragraph 3

Romeo is lots of fun to play with. He loves to play catch. He follows me around the house with a toy and drops it on my foot so I will toss it. He can catch just about anything, but his favorite is chasing a Frisbee. I really have fun playing with Romeo.

Make another question for paragraph 4

- How can your dog take care of you?



Write Paragraph 4

Romeo takes care of me. He always follows me when I leave a room. When I am sitting on a couch he plops down right beside me. On sunny days when we are hiking in the woods he always makes sure that I keep up with the rest of the family. He always watches out for me.

How to write conclusion?

- Paraphrase the opening paragraph into another paragraph using different words but does not change the meaning.

My favorite pet is my dog,
Romeo. He is beautiful and easy
to care for. Playing with him is
lots of fun. He always takes
care of me. I have never had a
better pet.

As you can see, Romeo is a great
pet. I am proud of him and he
doesn't require much care.
Playing with him is very
pleasurable. I am always safe
because he watches over me.
Romeo is a wonderful pet.

Now the essay is ready

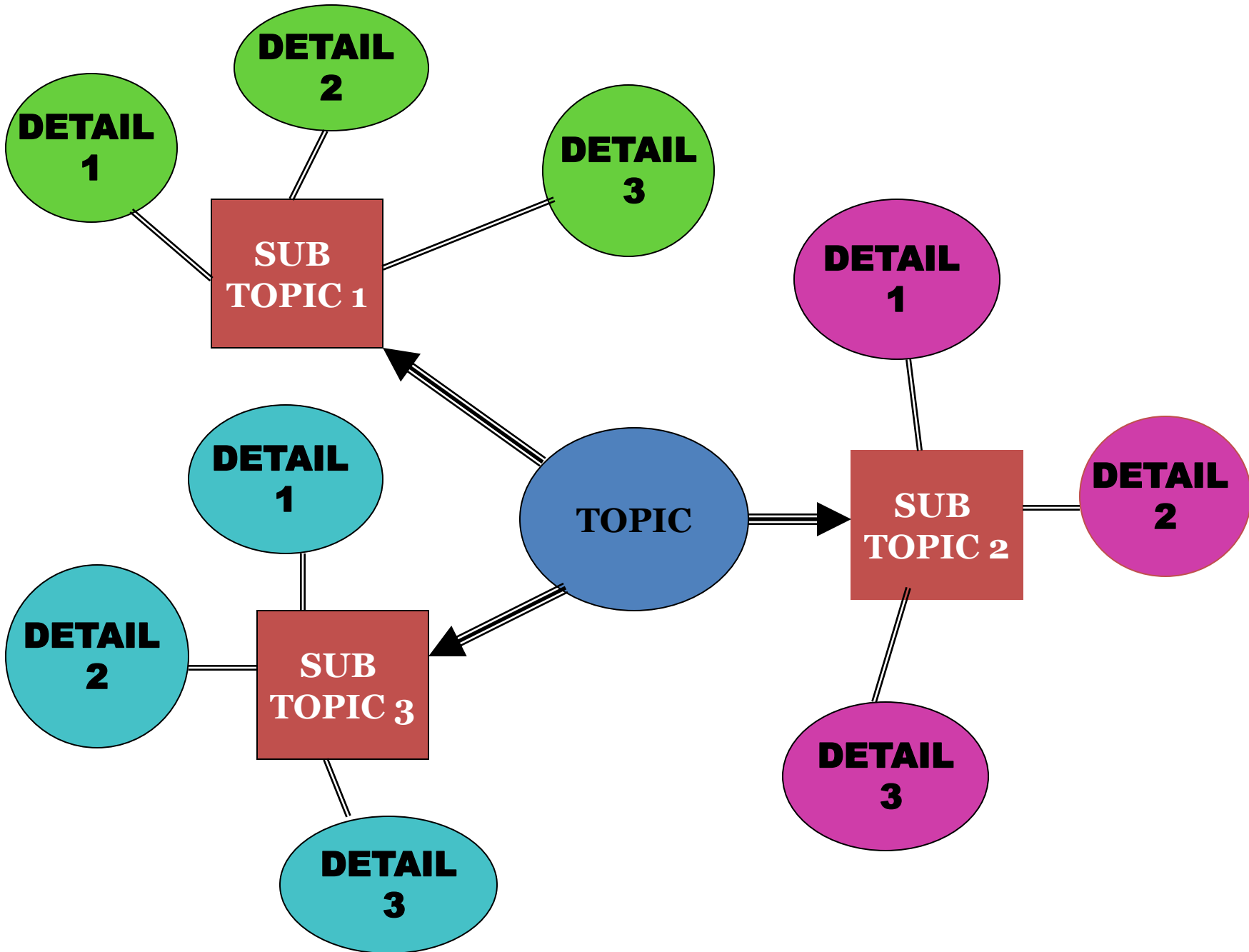
My favorite pet is my dog, Romeo. He is beautiful and easy to care for. Playing with him is lots of fun. He always takes care of me. I have never had a better pet.

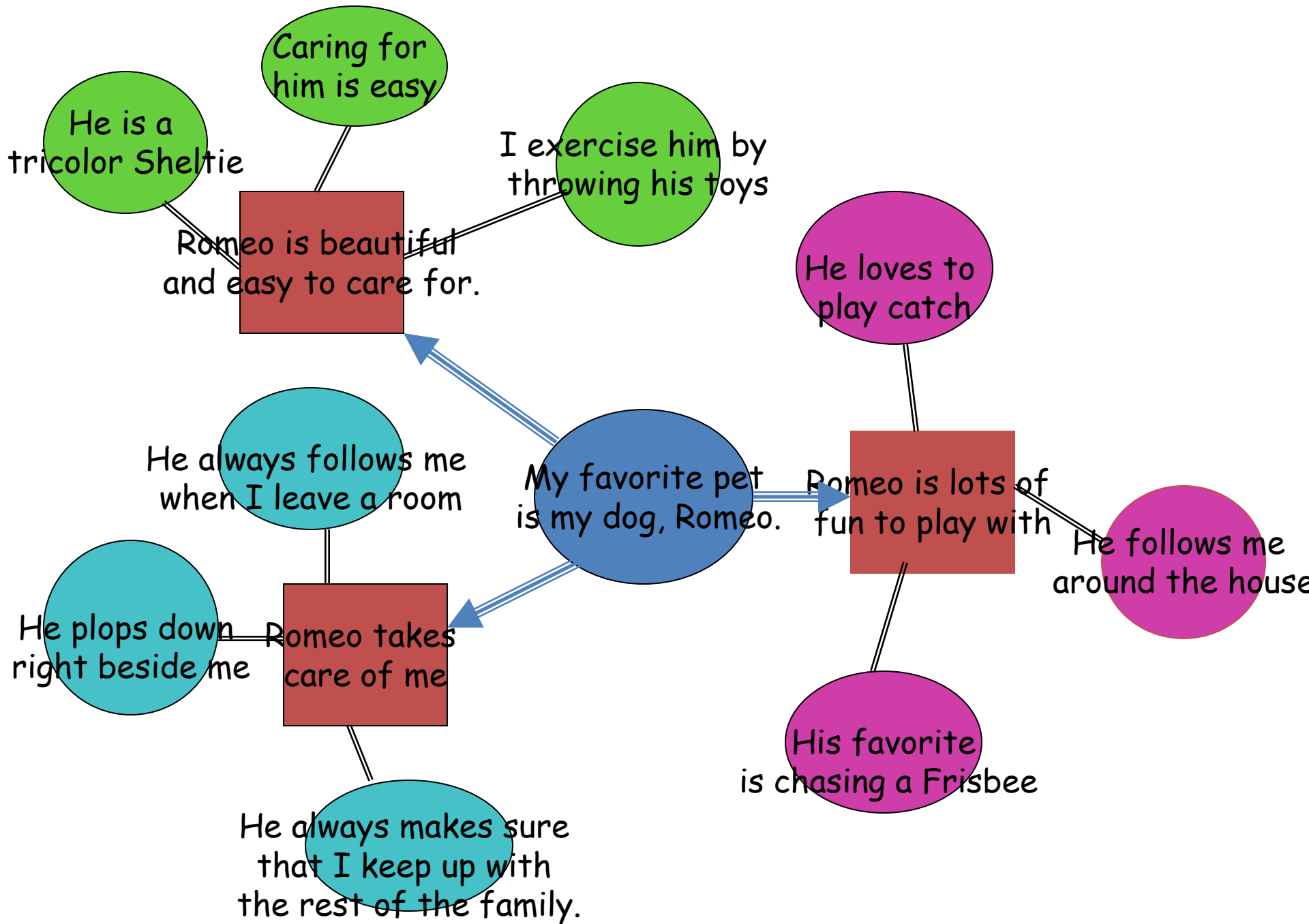
Romeo is beautiful and easy to care for. He is a tricolor Sheltie, mostly black with white and a bit of brown. Caring for him is easy because I simply have to make sure he has fresh water and food every day. I exercise him by throwing his toys. Because he is good looking and doesn't require much care Romeo is a good pet.

Romeo is lots of fun to play with. He loves to play catch. He follows me around the house with a toy and drops it on my foot so I will toss it. He can catch just about anything, but his favorite is chasing a Frisbee. I really have fun playing with Romeo.

Romeo takes care of me. He always follows me when I leave a room. When I am sitting on a couch he plops down right beside me. On sunny days when we are hiking in the woods he always makes sure that I keep up with the rest of the family. He always watches out for me.

As you can see, Romeo is a great pet. I am proud of him and he doesn't require much care. Playing with him is very pleasurable. I am always safe because he watches over me. Romeo is a wonderful pet.





“Position/Reaction Paper”

Purpose – to generate support on an issue. It describes a position on an issue and the rationale for that position. The position paper is based on facts that provide a solid foundation for your argument. You should:

- Use evidence to support your position, such as statistical evidence or dates and events.
- Validate your position with authoritative references or primary source quotations.
- Examine the strengths and weaknesses of your position.
- Evaluate possible solutions and suggest courses of action.

Picking an Issue

- Choose an issue where there is a **clear division of opinion and which is arguable** with facts and inductive reasoning.
- Even if you have a strong opinion, **look at the issue critically.**
- Prior to writing your paper, **define and limit your issue carefully.** Social issues are complex with multiple solutions. Narrow the topic of your position paper to something that is manageable.
- **Research** your issue thoroughly.
- Consider feasibility, cost-effectiveness and political/social climate when evaluating possible solutions and courses of action.

Social Issue Analysis

Purpose – to help readers understand social processes, and specifically, to apply the techniques of sociological analysis to a specific social issue or problem.

- Select a social issue to study
- Narrow your focus (e.g., definitional, geographic, historical, systems-based, interaction-based, future)
- Conduct your research
- Write the paper.

Structure of a Social Issue Paper

- ***An introduction “ROAD MAP”***

 - Identification of the issue

 - Statement of the position

- ***The body***

 - Background information

 - Supporting evidence or facts

 - **A discussion of both sides of the issue****

- ***A conclusion – answers the question “So what”?***

 - Suggested courses of action

 - Possible solutions

Use the parts of an argument to guide your research:

- What is your opinion on the issue? **(CLAIM)**
- Why should I believe that? **(REASONS)**
- How do you know those reasons to be true **(EVIDENCE)**
- But have you considered this view?
(ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & RESPONSE)

Logical Fallacies

- **Slippery Slope:** If we ban Hummers because they are bad for the environment eventually the government will ban all cars, so we should not ban Hummers.
- **Hasty Generalization:** Even though it's only the first day, I can tell this is going to be a boring course.
- **Post hoc ergo propter hoc:** I drank bottled water and now I am sick, so the water must have made me sick.

Logical Fallacies

- **Genetic Fallacy:** The Volkswagen Beetle is an evil car because it was originally designed by Hitler's army.
- **Begging the Claim:** Filthy and polluting coal should be banned.
- **Circular Argument:** George Bush is a good communicator because he speaks effectively.

Logical Fallacies

- **Ad Hominem:** Green Peace's strategies aren't effective because they are all dirty, lazy hippies.
- **Ad Populum:** If you were a true American you would support the rights of people to choose whatever vehicle they want.
- **Red Herring:** The level of mercury in seafood may be unsafe, but what will fishers do to support their families?

Logical Fallacies

- **Straw Man:** People who don't support the proposed state minimum wage increase hate the poor.
- **Moral Equivalence:** That parking attendant who gave me a ticket is as bad as Hitler.
- **Either/Or (False Dichotomy):** We can either stop using cars or destroy the earth.

What you will do in the Social Issue Reaction Paper:

- 1) Clearly define the issue you will address.
- 2) Clearly state your position on the issue.
- 3) Defend your position.
- 4) Conclude concisely.

Technicalities:

- *The essay should be at least 1,000 words, and hopefully no more than 1,200 words.*
- *The first draft is due on **SUNDAY, MARCH 18 at 23.59** – please send a copy to your partner AND post one in the Homework Vault.*
- *Your peer review comments are due **in class** on Tuesday - please bring a hard copy to class for your partner and post a copy to the Homework Vault.*

WEEK 4 - REQUIRED READING:

- Erickson, Kai, 2008. “On Sociological Writing,” *Sociological Inquiry* 78(3):399–411. (12 pp.)
- Sand-Jensen, Kaj. 2007. “How to write consistently boring scientific literature,” *Oikos* 116: 723-727. (4 pp.)
- Writing Center at the University of Wisconsin - Madison, The. 2003. “Acknowledging, Paraphrasing and Quoting Sources.” Retrieved February 15, 2012 (http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/Acknowledging_Sources.pdf). (7 pp.)
- SWG, Ch. 3, “Working with Sources.” pp. 45-59 (14 pp.)
- **HOMEWORK DUE IN CLASS: INDIVIDUALIZED READING FOR SOCIAL ISSUE ASSIGNMENT & PARAGRAPH ABOUT TOPIC**

Tips on revising

- Eliminate wordiness
- Redundant pairs – “everyday hassles and annoyances”
- Inflated phrases – “At this point...”
- Intensifiers – “single most common”
- Action in a noun rather than a verb – “a confident feeling”
- Passive voice
- Expletives – “it is” (Some researchers believe that it is the everyday hassles that cause stress.)

CHECKING YOURSELF

- Can you identify your thesis?
- Does your thesis remain central & evident throughout ?
- Do you support it with adequate evidence?
- Clear, logical relation between paragraphs? Sentences?
- Flow between generalizations and specifics that support them?
- Transitions between paragraphs? Sentences?
- Do all your words mean what you think they mean?
- Have you looked for errors in style?
- Contractions are OK with me!
- Have you stated your conclusion clearly and forcefully?
- Have you avoided sexist language/