**Paragraph Structures:**

**RACE to complete a short answer or PEEL away the layers for a longer response**

**R.A.C.E.**

The RACE method works well for short-answer questions that tie back to observable information. For example, if an I&S question asks you to “Give two reasons for the fall of Rome,” then you could easily answer in this method. This system might also work well for short answer questions about mixing colors in art, rules of a game in PE, what the theme of a story was in L&L, or the outcome of an experiment in science.

**Restate** the question.

**Answer** the question.

**Cite Textual Evidence** that supports your answer.

**Explain** how the evidence you offered proves your answer.

**P.E.E.L.**

The PEEL method works well for paragraph or essay responses that require more inferencing or synthesizing. For example, if the I&S question above asked instead for you to “Explain how widening gaps in social classes led to the fall of Rome,” then this method might be more appropriate. It requires a bit more explaining and therefore likely will result in more sentences overall.

**Point**  ***(Green means “Go!”)***

The beginning of the paragraph must state the point. It introduces the topic and tells the reader what the paragraph is going to be about. Sometimes stating the point can be covered in one topic sentence. Other times background is necessary to give the reader a sense of context, so he or she can follow along.

**Evidence** ***(Yellow means “Slow Down.”)***

The point must be supported with evidence and/or examples. Evidence can include facts, statistics, research findings, and quotes from a credible authority or a primary text. Depending on the purpose of the writing piece, paragraphs may have anywhere from one to four sentences of evidence. A good general rule is to aim for three.

**Explanation** ***(Red means “STOP and THINK!”)***

This is where great writers demonstrate their understanding by explaining in more detail how and why the given evidence supports the point. The explanation should clearly interpret the evidence for the reader. Every piece of evidence will require its own explanation.

**Link**  ***(Blue means “go slowly”.)***

Once all evidence has been given and explained, the end of the paragraph should reinforce the point. It will either link the end of the paragraph back to the point, or it will transition to the next paragraph in a paper or essay.