

Thesis: The changing symbolism of the scaffold in *The Scarlet Letter* parallels the community's evolving attitude toward sin.

Point 1: In the novel's opening scene, we see in Hester's stance on the scaffold the town's belief in public shaming as a communal healing.

Point 2: Midway through the novel, Dimmesdale ascends the scaffold, where he is later joined by Hester and Pearl, receiving strength from their presence despite the private shame he feels. In this the scaffold becomes a rendezvous for the communal outcasts, who find in each other a love that transcends their public sin.

Point 3: Finally, as Dimmesdale confesses publicly on the scaffold in the novel's final scene, we see in the townspeople's refusal to judge him (many not even seeing the letter on his chest) a turnaround from the initial condemnation of Hester, indicating the town has come to value the hearts of its citizens more than their failings.

DIALECTIC: A dialectic structure is based on German philosopher Hegel's explanation of history as a dialectic movement. Hegel suggested that an initial stance, a thesis, always creates an opposing stance, an antithesis. The opposing stances battle until they arrive at some kind of compromise, a synthesis. The implication of the dialectic is that the third stage is a balancing of some sort between the first two stages, indicating that the final stance mixes the knowledge of the first stances.

Thesis: The daughters in Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* must first reject the heritage of their mothers before they are able to find balance.

Point 1: Growing up as young Chinese-Americans, the daughters are steeped in the culture of their mothers.

Point 2: As the daughters become young women, they feel stifled by their mothers' dictates, and each rebels against her Chinese culture, embracing the modernity of America.

Point 3: Only after the daughters see shortcomings in American culture and begin to realize the strength of their mothers' upbringings are they able to integrate the values of the two cultures and achieve balance.

CAUSE/EFFECT: A cause and effect argument is based on a logical thought pattern of a premise and a conclusion. For instance, **if** politicians continue to lie to the American public, **then** voter turnout will continue to decline. Or, **if** teens start smoking early in life, **then** quitting will be harder as they grow older. A paper structured around a cause and effect (or premise and conclusion) tends to develop only two major points, but the