Instructions: These are sample introduction paragraphs from student papers. Work with the sample introduction paragraph number assigned to your group. Read it carefully and then identify the paragraph as (a.) acceptable or (b.) unacceptable. The paragraph is acceptable ONLY if it contains the following two items: (i.) a clearly stated [not implied] position statement, i.e. claim or theses, and (ii.) a blueprint for the paper that outlines what points of support will be discussed/explained/illustrated in the body of the essay. Be prepared to report your findings with the rest of the class.

1. It is important for people to try to help their friends, even if a situation puts them in harm’s way. I learned this one spring day, when a tornado victimized downtown San Antonio. I could have stayed in my closet with my cat, a mattress over my head and a radio, but in hindsight, I am glad I braved the storm to look for my friends. In hindsight, this terrifying experience helped me overcome several personal fears, taught me how to be a good steward, and showed me the true value of community.

2. My summer vacation consisted of visiting places such as Orlando Florida, San Antonio Texas, Boston Massachusetts, and everywhere in between, but was it really a vacation well yes and no. My “vacation” started sometime in November in Toledo, Ohio and ended on August 14 in Foxboro, Massachusetts. What was I doing that led me to so many places and kept me busy for such a long time you ask? I was marching drum corps with The Glassmen from Toledo, Ohio. This was certainly not a typical vacation.

3. As I sat in the stern wooden pew, my mind wandered back to the previous autumn. It had been Sean’s nineteenth birthday. Sean was the best friend of my boyfriend, Troy. Sean was also the boyfriend of my best friend, Lisa. The four of us, needless to say, had spent a lot of time together having fun. We played softball, went to dances, drank a few beers, acted silly. But I know now that what we did wasn’t always fun; it was sometimes dangerous stupidity. I learned the hard way that drinking and driving isn’t fun; it is extremely dangerous. The price of this lesson cost me my reputation, my self-respect, and the lives of two of my friends.
4. Looking back on my short time on this planet there are many memorable moments that I believed have shaped my life. But when I think of something monumental that has had a lasting impact, something that has reshaped me one thing come to mind, the death of my friend Max and Grandmother in the winter of tenth grade. Looking back on this grief and tragedy I know now that something’s are meant to happen for a reason. Because it hadn’t been for those tragedies I would have never located my best friend and light of my life Luke nor would I be the strong motivated person I am today.

5. I will never forget the evening that a life-altering change came over me. On a hunting excursion several years ago, I found myself close enough to a fawn to see the color of its eyes and distinguish the individual hairs on its nose. Even though the incident lasted about three minutes, I realized that, for most of my life, I had erroneously equated the word “hunting” with the word “killing.” This experience taught me that hunting doesn’t have to involve the slaughter of an animal. Substituting a high quality camera for a bow and arrow, I can still experience the so-called thrill of the hunt with the same stalking, the same waiting, and the same time spent reestablishing my personal link with nature.
6. School had just begun. I had officially been in the fifth grade a little over a month. Little
did I know how much my life was going to change that year. One day around the middle of
October my cousin, Ashlan, came to school and couldn’t wait to tell me her great news. The
previous night her parents sat her and her younger sister down and cheerfully announced that
there was going to be a new addition to their family. Her mom was due the end of May. I
tried to act happy for her, but in reality, I was jealous. I had been hoping for a baby brother or
sister for years. Besides, she already had one sister. Why did she get to have a second one
when I couldn’t even have one? That night, I went home from school and shared my sorrows
with my mother. Now that I think back on that night, she was probably busting at the seams to
tell me her own news.

7. It was 2009 when I was asked to my first high school prom. My date was to be a shy, tall,
slender, blonde, and blue-eyed senior, who wore the most wonderful cologne, and also had a
sports car that I absolutely adored. With only two months before the dance, I decided that we
had better get to know one other with a few dates. Trusting the absolutely ridiculous cliché
“opposites attract,” I believed that we would get along just fine. However, I was wrong. What
should have been dating heaven turned into dating hell! Never again will I be fooled by
appearances, take what someone says about themselves as true on faith, or resist my natural
instinct to let a courtship blossom as slowly as possible.
8. What do most people think of when they hear the word cheerleading? It’s probable that they imagine a ditzy girl in a short skirt waving her arms around when a football player has just made the winning touchdown. To me, however, cheerleading is an activity that encompasses much more than just standing on the sidelines of a football game. I learned this one summer at a very unique cheerleading camp with an outstanding group of instructors and teammates. Though the experience was physically harrowing, it ultimately taught me the meaning of teamwork, dedication, and sacrifice in a way that I might never have realized had I never participated in this highly competitive sport.

9. While some people might only read about faraway places in books or see them in pictures, certain individuals visit exotic locations so that they can better understand others and where they fit into our world. Traveling to East Asia last summer gave me the opportunity to draw independent conclusions about a place for myself, without outside opinions or bias. The experience taught me that travel can cure an apathetic attitude towards the world, help pave the way for a more peaceful coexistence between various peoples of the world, and, in doing so, might also allow the traveler to do some vital self-discovery.