**Writing Good A Level Paragraphs**

On the left hand side of the table are a series of sentences from an imagined essay on Shakespeare’s presentation of Iago. Please do the following tasks:

1. Put the sentences in the correct order by numbering them 1-5.
2. Draw a line between each of the sentences in the left hand column and the description of its correct role in the right hand column.

**Function of each sentence in Paragraph**

**Deconstructed Paragraph**

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| For example, in Act one scene Iago uses animal imagery, calling Othello variously a ‘black ram’ (line 89), a Barbary horse (line 111), a ‘jennet[s]’ (line 113) and a ‘courser [s]’ (line 113). | Close linguistic analysis of your quotation, showing in detail how it supports your point. |
| Ironically, when we meet Othello in the next scene, we realise he is eloquent and self-controlled, whereas it is Iago who is crude and basic, and our own prejudices and assumptions are challenged. | Contextual information, where relevant, to support point. |
| Shakespeare’s audience would have been aware of the Great Chain of Being, a medieval religious hierarchy, which placed animals lower than humans, and which immediately alerts us to the insult implicit in the animal reference. | Initial ‘topic sentence’ establishing argument of paragraph. |
| The ‘black ram’ not only suggests Othello’s colour, but also his lack of sexual restraint – behaving like a rampant animal - a trait commonly attributed to men of African descent in the early seventeenth century. | Linking sentence, taking the reader from the overall argument to the specific example you are going on to give. Try to pick out *patterns* of words or phrases, to show how a feature is used throughout rather than pinning a whole interpretation on an individual word. |
| Shakespeare uses Iago to present the theme of self-esteem in the play. Because he has been overlooked by Othello for the position of lieutenant, Iago insults Othello in his absence as a way of recovering some of his own self esteem by debasing the man who has caused him hurt. | Final sentence rounding off the paragraph before you move on to your next point. |

Now have a go at re-ordering the sentences on this A level answer on Identity in ‘Othello.’ (Please note there are some references to critics which you don’t need to mention at this stage but it is interesting to note how they are used). Then identify the role of each sentence.

*She seems somewhat to epitomize the Elizabethan ‘madonna-whore’ dichotomy which, as Marilyn French has commented, focus on either ‘idealising’ or ‘degrading’ sexuality.*

*Desdemona is heavily idealised by both her father, Brabantio – who describes her as a ‘maiden never bold’ and Cassio, who describes her as ‘divine…the grace of heaven’ with the religious imagery highlighting her portrayal as an Madonna-type figure.*

*The identity of Desdemona is another which is constantly subject to fluctuation and change. However, unlike Othello, this is not a result of her own divided nature, but the fact that she becomes the victim of other people’s idealisations. Iago, in contrast, paints Desdemona as the ‘super-subtle Venetian who would ‘let God see the pranks’ she would not ‘dare show’ her husband.*

*Honigmann has commented that Desdemona is portrayed as a ‘woman as man likes to reinvent her’ in ‘Othello’ and, indeed the multifaceted nature of her identity seems to be overlooked by the characters who stereotype her.*

Finally, rewrite on of your paragraphs from your own Othello essay in order to address all the elements (excluding critics) of a successful A level paragraph.