Critical Reading Guide for Workshops: Argument

Writers: Include the following information on the top of your typewritten workshop drafts:
1: Audience: How do you think your interpretation builds on or contradicts the interpretations your readers are likely to have?
2: Purpose: What do you want your readers to learn about the story from your essay?

Readers

Write a brief (four sentence) paragraph on each section to help give critical comments on the essay being workshopped.

Essay Title:

Author:

Reader’s Name:

1: First Impression: What’s the dominant impression you get from the first quick reading?

2: Comment on the thesis statement and how well it forecasts the argument: Find the thesis statement and underline what you think to be the key terms. If you cannot find the thesis statement, let the writer know. Then skim the essay and mark where the key terms reappear and supported. Write down in the margin what you think should be added.
3: **Indicate whether the reasons are clearly explained.** Look closely at the section where each reason is developed. Note whether the reason is explained and connected to the story.

4: **Evaluate the essay’s logic and coherence.** Comment on anything on the essay that contradicts the thesis or the reasons for it. Note where the logical connections are strong, and where they are weak.

5: **Suggest how the organization could be improved.** Consider the overall plan. Note where the argument is hard to follow or where transitions are missing or do not work well.

Is the *beginning* effective? Why or why not?
Is the ending effective? Why or why not? Is it too abrupt? Suggest how you think the ending could be improved?