Notes on Classification Essays

Classification:
★ Groups together nouns (people or things) that are alike in some way into smaller groups.
★ The categories don’t need to exist “in real life” – in fact, that way of organizing is usually boring!
★ Boring: Students by their GPA
   More interesting: age – Religion – Those who are married, single, or dating – etc.
★ Boring: Cars by number of wheels
   More interesting: Cars I want to drive, Cars I never want to drive

Use ONE method to group your topic.
For example: Classify people by intelligence OR income. Never by “intelligence AND income.”

Your method must include ALL your topic
For example:
YES: “There are five kinds of book collectors: the perfectionist, the teacher, the antique-lover, the collector, and the art lover.”
NO: “There are three kinds of book collectors: the perfectionists, the teachers, and others.”

You must label all categories.
For example:
YES: “helpful husbands, unhelpful husbands, and confused husbands”
NO: “helpful husbands, unhelpful husbands, and husbands in the middle”
★ A common writing style for business, science, advertising, editorials
★ For Wr. 8: Be PERSONAL: sarcastic, humorous, or creative

Example thesis statements:
“Girls have various ways of choosing boyfriends, based on their desire for money, love, or common interests.”
Topic: Ways to choose a partner
Criterion: What they value

“There are different reasons why American families choose to host an international student.”
Topic: Host families
Criterion: Reasons why they want to host a student

“Lithuanian immigrants can be classed into three groups according to their approaches to preservation of their native language.”
Topic: Lithuanian immigrants
Criterion: Their attitude toward their first language
**EXAMPLES: Possible Topics, with Criteria and Categories**

Topic: new fathers  
Criterion: their attitude toward babies  
Groups:  
1) the experienced – they like babies, feel confident  
2) the ignorant/nervous – they don’t feel confident - but they like babies  
3) old-fashioned: “It’s mom’s job” (would rather not touch babies)

Topic: TV watching habits  
Criterion: (Can you write one?)  
Groups:  
1) they watch all the time  
2) they watch alone  
3) they pay a lot of $ for cable TV

**Possible topics: Try to write a Criterion for each and choose some categories.**

   Remember – sometimes the best technique is to choose the categories FIRST, then decide the criterion!

   - reasons for getting a pet  
   - video game players  
   - drivers in a certain city  
   - ways of cleaning the kitchen  
   - love  
   - bad bosses  
   - memories  
   - hobbies  
   - cheating (in school)  
   - cheating (on your husband or wife)  
   - addictions, or habits