Poe, Marshall. “The Other Gender Gap” *The Atlantic Monthly*. The Atlantic Monthly Group. 1Jan 2004. Web.

Prompt:

1. Write a Thesis, Intention, Bias and Tone Paragraph where you examining the author’s use of deductive and inductive reasoning to make their argument

Deductive Reasoning (based on undisputed facts)

Inductive Reasoning (using a variety of evidence to lead to a conclusion--inference)

1. Guided Highlighted Reading: Find the techniques below and highlight
2. Supported by facts/statistics (Deductive Reasoning) (Pink)
3. Example that leads to Generalization (Inductive Reasoning) (Yellow)
4. Anecdotes—personal stories to support (Inductive Reasoning) (Yellow)
5. Making a conclusion from generalizing a variety of available evidence (Inductive Reasoning) (Green)

“The Other Gender Gap: Maybe boys just weren’t meant for the classroom.”

The women's movement has taught us many things, one of the more surprising being that boys are not performing in school as well as they might.

Three decades ago reformers' attention was focused on the "higher-education gap"—the fact that not as many girls went on to college, graduate school, and professional school as boys. Advocates of equality between the sexes fought hard to create gender-specific education programs, fair admissions policies, and professional societies for women. Their efforts were rewarded: from 1970 to 2000 the number of women attending college rose by 136 percent, graduate school by 168 percent, and professional school by 853 percent.

Yet soon the higher-education gap opened again—but this time girls were on the other side of it. In the late 1970s more girls than boys began to enroll in college, and the disparity has since increased. Today women make up approximately 56 percent of all undergraduates, outnumbering men by about 1.7 million. In addition, about 300,000 more women than men enter graduate school each year. (The gap does not particularly affect professional school; almost as many women as men attend.) In short, equal opportunity brought an unequal result.

The advance of girls relative to boys might well have been predicted from patterns in K-12 schooling, where girls have long been outperforming boys on several measures. In both primary and secondary school girls tend to receive higher marks than boys. Since the inception, in 1969, of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (a standardized exam given to nine-, thirteen-, and seventeen-year-olds), girls at all grade levels have scored much higher, on average, than boys in language skills, and about the same in math. (True, college-bound boys have long outperformed girls overall on the SAT, but it is likely that boys' average scores are statistically elevated by the fact that roughly 10 percent fewer of them take the exam—and those who opt out tend to be lower achievers.) It is hardly surprising, then, that once various cultural barriers were removed, girls began entering college at a greater rate.

The continuing advance among girls has thrown a spotlight on the stagnation of boys. During the past decade the percentage of boys who complete high school (about 70), enter college (about 40), and go on to graduate school (about eight) has risen only slightly or not at all. And this despite the fact that the economic payoff of higher education has never been greater. Whereas girls continue to demonstrate that society has not yet reached any "natural" limit on college-attendance rates, boys have somehow gotten stuck. If boys and girls have roughly equal abilities, then why aren't they doing equally well?

From kindergarten on, the education system rewards self-control, obedience, and concentration—qualities that, any teacher can tell you, are much more common among girls than boys, particularly at young ages. Boys fidget, fool around, fight, and worse. Thirty years ago teachers may have accommodated and managed this behavior, in part by devoting more attention to boys than to girls. But as girls have come to attract equal attention, as an inability to sit still has been medicalized, and as the options for curbing student misbehavior have been ever more curtailed, boys may have suffered. Boys make up three quarters of all children categorized as learning disabled today, and they are put in special education at a much higher rate (special education is often misused as a place to stick "problem kids," and children seldom switch from there to the college track). Shorter recess times, less physical education, and more time spent on rote learning (in order to meet testing standards) may have exacerbated the problems that boys tend to experience in the classroom. It is no wonder, then, that many boys disengage academically. Boys are also subject to a range of extrinsic factors that hinder their academic performance and pull them out of school at greater rates than girls. First among these is the labor market. Young men, with or without high school diplomas, earn more than young women, so they are more likely to see work as an *alternative* to school. Employment gives many men immediate monetary gratification along with relief from the drudgery of the classroom.

But boys' educational stagnation has long-term economic implications. Not even half the boys in the country are taking advantage of the opportunity to go to college, which has become almost a prerequisite for a middle-class lifestyle. And languishing academic attainment among a large portion of our population spells trouble for the prospects of continued economic growth. Unless more boys begin attending college, the nation may face a shortage of highly skilled workers in the coming decades.

The trouble with boys is not confined to the United States; boys are being outperformed by girls throughout the developed world. The United Kingdom and Australia are currently testing programs aimed at making education more boy-friendly. Single-sex schools, single-sex classes, and gender-specific curricula are all being tried. Here the United States lags: there are several local initiatives aimed at boys, but nothing on the national level—perhaps owing to a residual anxiety over the idea of helping boys in a society where men for so long enjoyed special advantages.