

Support paragraphs can walk your reader through your argument on FEET. The following ideas are to assist you in building support paragraphs. Although these elements do not necessarily have to come in this order, FEET should be easy to remember. Different essay prompts call for different paragraph structure, and you should feel empowered to play with this structure once you understand the elements of argumentative paragraphs and their jobs.



Thesis Statement



Focus sentence: Commonly known as a topic sentence, the focus of the paragraph (the point it will prove) should be articulated in the **focus sentence**. This sentence doesn't necessarily have to be the first sentence, but it must clearly voice the point of the paragraph: a point from your argument the paragraph works to prove/support. If you wait until too late in the paragraph to show your focus, the reader might lose focus and not understand your idea.



Evidence: In argumentative essays, a writer needs to use proof. Most often, in college writing, proof or evidence comes in the forms of direct quotes or paraphrases from a text and personal experience or personal observations. Choose the most relevant, specific examples possible, and be sure each one absolutely supports the paragraph's point. Also, don't just plop the example down into the paragraph. Use some interesting setup/context to introduce the example subtly and effectively. This group of sentences works to provide the evidence of your point.



Explanation: Although humans are a bright species, they often need to have some ideas spelled out for them. In argumentative essays, this is especially true because in most essays, you want to take the reader where you want her/him to go; you don't want her/him to walk away with your ideas in an undesirable direction. Explanation allows you to show your reader how your example perfectly proves/supports the focus idea of the paragraph. This group of sentences allows the reader to see how your evidence is in fact relevant, specific, and necessary.



Tie to the thesis: You must demonstrate to the reader how the support paragraph ties to/connects to/relates to the thesis statement. This tie works to show how the support paragraph indeed proves the point you outlined in the thesis statement. This group of sentences walks the reader back to the thesis so she/he can clearly see you've proven your argument through pointed focus, relevant and specific evidence, and logical analysis/explanation of support.