

Developing body paragraphs- types of evidence

In an essay, you need to support your thesis and your subordinate points with evidence. The claim you are making tends to dictate which kind of evidence you will use, but writers tend to employ multiple types in the course of an essay. Here are some standard types of evidence.

- **Examples.** Examples illustrate a point by showing the reader an event, person, place, object, etc. Examples can be *brief*, especially if you want to provide multiple examples. They can also be *extended*, when a careful examination of details is what is required. Keep in mind that examples rarely prove a point by themselves. They need to be fully explained and often need to be matched with other evidence.
 - *A twelve year-old girl who was going through puberty felt that her growing hips and bust made her look fat (Morgan 145).*
- **Authority.** An authority is an expert in the field you are writing about. An authority is usually a researcher or a professional in that field. Your own reasoning is the most important part of any essay you write, but the views of an expert can give greater validity to your argument. You can paraphrase or quote an expert. In either case, you will need to cite the expert properly.
 - *According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health, young women are developing eating disorders faster than ever before in our nation's history (Morgan 145).*
- **Facts and Statistics.** A fact is something that has been decided upon objectively and can be externally verified. In other words, anybody can look it up. A statistic is similar, but be sure to pay attention to who sponsored the statistic you are using (which may betray a bias). And in both cases, make sure you understand exactly what the fact or statistic is measuring. For instance, the U.S. creates more pollution per capita, but China creates more pollution overall. What's the difference? China is the biggest polluter, but the average U.S. citizen pollutes more than any other person in the world. Facts and statistics give your argument authority and are good way of proving patterns exist, but they can often be abstract and lack emotion.
 - *"90 percent of those affected with eating disorders are adolescent and young adult females" (Morgan 146).*
- **Testimony.** Testimony is when you use the experience of a person who has seen or experienced the thing you are writing about. First-hand testimony is a good way of giving your argument emotional weight, because you provide a person for the reader to identify with. The drawback is that testimony is the experience of only one person. It doesn't prove a pattern exists. Also keep in mind that emotion should never be a replacement for logical reasoning.
 - *"My friend Irene Price, the mother of a 14-year-old girl, laments: 'The problem with rap is that the images of cool women they present are always degrading to girls. They get to be only one thing—toys for boys. I don't want my daughter modeling herself after that'" (Morgan 145).*

Developing paragraphs- patterns of argument

The types of evidence are merely tools; a writer uses those tools to prove the points in an essay. This is referred to as *argument* and arguments tend to fall into certain patterns, also known as *rhetorical modes*. Here is a list of the common rhetorical modes. Keep in mind that while you may use description and narration, in college you *cannot* rely on these patterns only. Simply telling a story or describing a subject does not make an analytical essay.

- **Description-** In a descriptive paragraph, you use specific sensory details to create a clear image of a subject for the reader. Consider using sight, sound, touch, taste, and/or smell. Also, choose a pattern of organization. For instance, if you were to describe how something looks you might want to organize the description moving from top to bottom, or perhaps from left to right.
- **Narration-** A narrative paragraph tells a story or recreates an event. Following a clear time sequence will make the information easier to follow for the reader. Pay special attention to details that the reader needs to know in order to make sense of the story. Focus only on the details of the story that prove your point.
- **Exemplification-** This is probably the most basic pattern of development. Here you give a clear example to illustrate your point. In some instances, the example may be short. In other cases, you may need to develop a longer illustration. In either case, the example tends to follow closely after the topic sentence of the paragraph.
- **Comparison and Contrast-** Here you focus on either the similarities (comparison) or differences (contrast) between two or more subjects. You can organize your paragraph subject by subject or point by point. In subject by subject, you describe one subject completely before moving on to the next one. In point by point, you compare or contrast the subjects directly using the same point of comparison.
- **Cause and Effect-** Here you focus on either exploring why something happened, or explaining what the outcome was. Consider focusing on either immediate (close at hand, recent) causes or effects, or remote (underlying, earlier) causes or effects. When examining effects, make sure you show the prior situation so that the reader can see the full change. Also, watch out for *post hoc* reasoning; just because one thing follows another, it doesn't mean that the one causes the other. So carefully explain the cause and effect relationship.
- **Process Analysis-** A process analysis paragraph explains a procedure or breaks down the steps of a process. Details are usually organized chronologically. Sometimes process analysis can be a long chain of cause and effect relationships. Be sure to explain the significance of the order of the steps to the reader and explain any special terms or concepts.
- **Definition-** Here you explain the meaning of a complex term or concept. Sometimes it is necessary to explain why the subject you are defining is unique. This is usually done through a comparison with other similar subjects, focusing on the key differences between them and your subject. Make sure to provide concrete examples when you are defining an abstract concept.
- **Classification and Division-** Classification is the grouping of similar items together and explaining why they belong to the same group. When classifying, you need to clearly define a principle for classification and show why each item shares this principle. Division is either the separating of various related items into different groups by demonstrating why the items are unique, or the division of a single item into constituent parts.