

English 12

Research Paper

Writing the Argument Paragraph (Body Paragraph #1)

Overview

The purpose of the argument paragraph is to lay out the two most important reasons why your argument about your person and event is correct.

- **Basic structure of your paragraph:** C CDW CDW C
- **Number of outside sources you will need** for this paragraph: 2 or more
- **Number of parentheses with citations in them I will see in this paragraph:** 2 or more.

NOTE: You can paraphrase, directly quote, or summarize an argument. No matter what, though, if the information you're referring to comes out of some place **BESIDES** your own head, you need to cite it **BY NAME**. **Name names in order to avoid plagiarism!**

Directions

In the argument paper, you are focusing on the **TWO** most important pieces of data that prove your argument to be true.

- **Claim**
 - In the claim, include the key words: the name of your person/name of the event/ your argument/the word "because"
- **Context #1:** Give me information **ABOUT** the first piece of data you will cover or explore. Who or what is it about? Why is it important?
- **Data #1:** Now give me the data. You can paraphrase, summarize, or directly quote.
 - **CITATION IN PARENTHESES:** NAME NAMES. Put the name of your source in parentheses after the data.
- **Warrant #1:** Explain why, how come, in what way, and for what reason that data you just now quoted or used actually makes your argument valid. Use *because*, *since*, *in order to*, or other clear explanation. Use the name of your person and the name of your event.
- **Context #2:** Give me information about the **SECOND** piece of data you will cover or explore. Who or what is it about? Why is it important?
- **Data #2:** Now give me the data. You can paraphrase, summarize, or directly quote.
 - **CITATION IN PARENTHESES:** NAME NAMES. Put the name of your source in parentheses after the data.

- **Warrant #2:** Explain why, how come, in what way, and for what reason that data you just now quoted or used actually makes your argument valid. Use because, since, in order to, or other clear explanation.
- **Conclusion:** Restate the primary argument you're making here.

EXAMPLE OF WHAT YOUR ARGUMENT PARAGRAPH WILL LOOK LIKE = EXPLAINED

First, [**Notice you're leading off with a transition word that indicates that you're dealing with the first idea**], a particularly damning piece of physical evidence that came out in the criminal trial of O.J. Simpson in 1995 was Simpson's cut finger- a cut about which Simpson was inexplicably vague--and the second [**notice this other transition word**] and perhaps even more damning piece of evidence was the timeline of the cut, both of which argued very strongly that Simpson was guilty of murdering his ex-wife and her friend. [**That last part is your central argument: Simpson was guilty.**] In his initial witness interview that took place immediately after his return from Chicago, where he'd flown to on the night of the murders, Simpson was taken to the LAPD's central command at Parker Center where he was interviewed by the two lead detectives on the case, Philip Lange and Thomas Vanatter (Sage Publications 23), and during that interview, Lange and Vanatter asked Simpson how he'd received a particularly notable 2.25" cut on the middle finger of his left hand (Margolic). [**This is context and data woven together. I'm telling who, what, where, when, why. Notice how here, I'm using two pieces of data, one to set up who interviewed Simpson and where, and the other about the cut. I'm summarizing, but I'm still naming names in parentheses, showing where I got all that information from.**] During the interview with Vanatter and Lange, not only did Simpson not consistently pinpoint where and when he'd received it, but Simpson's explanation about the cut kept changing. Initially, Simpson claimed he cut it on a piece of glass in his Chicago hotel room when he was informed of his wife's death, stating, "I broke a glass. One of you guys had just called me, and I was in the bathroom, and I just kind of went bonkers for a little bit," but when Lange clarifies, asking if the glass was the reason his finger got cut, Simpson backtracks and states, "it was cut before," adding that he was bleeding at his house and in his Bronco before he left for Chicago on the night of the murders (Linder). [**Note: This citation from Linder means that all the information in that sentence, including the quotes, was taken from the Linder source.**] The significance of this interview and Simpson's admission here cannot be understated. [**This is a transition leading in to your warrant, basically saying, "OK, THIS IS REALLY IMPORTANT AND I'M ABOUT TO TELL YOU WHY."**] The cut itself is a particularly damning piece of evidence on its own. At 2.25" and visibly bleeding in Simpson's house, in Simpson's car, and possibly in his Chicago hotel room, this was not a minor cut, nor was it bleeding just a little. Simpson's backtracking from "I broke a glass" to "it was cut before" is problematic, to say the least, especially because a cut of that extent and severity isn't one that simply escapes notice. It's not a shaving nick. However, it is in his later statement about the timeline of the cut that Simpson makes an enormously culpable admission. [**Notice that now, you're heading into the second basic idea in your claim sentence here: that it was also the timeline that was important,**] Making sure about the cut, Lange asks when he recalls having that cut on his finger. Simpson answers, "...It was last night." Vanatter

follows with the clarifying question, “Somewhere after [your daughter’s dance] recital?” and Simpson answers “Yeah” (Linder). In other words, [**Notice how you’re summarizing the importance of the data that came right before here.**] Simpson received a significant 2.25” actively bleeding cut on his left hand on the precise night his ex-wife was stabbed to death with a knife. Not only that, but this cut occurs during the precise window of time in which his ex-wife’s murder took place: between his daughter’s dance recital and his departure to Chicago. The idea that this cut could have been a mere coincidence strains credulity and makes it nearly impossible to believe that these two events were somehow unrelated. One possible explanation for Simpson’s shifting story is that the LAPD has examined his car and residence, so he must account for the blood he knows is already there, blood that was deposited there before he left for Chicago. By presenting this information out of order, Simpson may have wished to confuse the issue, but a closer examination of the timeline of events in the order they happened is truly damning. Ultimately, the evidence of the cut finger and the timeline -- plus Simpson’s shifting story -- argue strongly for his guilt. [**This is your conclusion sentence in which you reiterate your claim in different words.**]