

Analysis Paragraph

(using the point, example, explanation structure)

Point:

Every paragraph should have a point to guide its development. Generally, the point will be presented as part of the topic sentence.

Examples:

Specific examples should be presented to begin the development of the point. Be sure to develop the examples as specifically as possible while remaining concise.

Explanation:

Each example should include an explanation that explains how and why the example is, in fact, an example of what the writer says it is. The explanation will help to support and clarify the point by explicitly connecting it to the examples.

The following paragraph is from a student paper that analyzed George W. Bush's web site during the 2000 presidential campaign.

The point is in bold.

The examples are in italics.

The explanations are underlined.

Many photos on Bush's web site are designed to give him the look of a president. *One such photo is found on his biographical page, a shot of him standing with his wife in a stately room, a portrait of one of the founding fathers just behind his shoulder. A subtle connection is quickly made between the couple and the White House. The room looks very plush, as one would imagine a sitting room on the west wing. The portrait located just behind Bush's shoulder gives the room a patriotic air and also connects Bush's face with what may have been one of the first presidents. Our founding fathers are thought of as good, pious, and just, all qualities we desire in presidents today. Following the question of Clinton's and Gore's characters, they are also qualities that Bush wishes the American people to see in him and his campaign.*

Argument Analysis Paragraph

Identify the claim (point), reasons (examples), and warrants (explanations) in the following paragraphs.

Here's a paragraph from the student argument analysis on pages 164-166 in the *St. Martin's Handbook*.

The author earns the reader's respect because of his knowledge and through his logical presentation of the issue. In partial support of his position, Bok refers to U.S. Supreme Court rulings, which remind us that "the display of swastikas or Confederate flags clearly falls within the protection of the free-speech clause of the First Amendment" (52). The author also emphasizes the danger of the slippery slope of censorship when he warns the reader, "If we begin to forbid flags, it is only a short step to prohibiting offensive speakers" (52). Overall, however, Bok's work lacks the kinds of evidence that statistics, interviews with students, and other representative examples of controversial conduct could provide. Thus, his essay may not be strong enough to persuade all readers to make the leap from this specific situation to his general conclusion.

Here's another paragraph from a paper in which the student was required to analyze and critique an argument in favor of allowing children the right to vote

Wallace also makes the mistake of trying to use unsupported assumptions to help her argument. These assumptions are not based on very solid evidence, if any at all, and do not help her prove her point. Related to her argument that children are more likely to be interested in voting if they could vote, Wallace makes another point. She states that adults many times try to teach children things when they are not ready, and thus not interested. She then turns this argument around saying "interest follows hand in hand with readiness" (83). While it may be true a child may not be interested in something when she is not ready, this does not automatically make the converse true. Readiness does not necessarily follow interest as seen by the law that does not allow children to drive. Even if a child is interested in driving, she will not be automatically ready. Another example appears in paragraph nine. Wallace assumes children act irresponsibly because they do not have the ability to resolve their problems maturely through legal means (84). She cites no evidence to back the validity of her point. She oversimplifies her argument by using either/or reasoning: either children voice their opinions responsibly through the courts, or they voice them irresponsibly. Wallace ignores the possibility that other alternatives exist such as talking about one's problems with an understanding adult who may try to help the child. Again, Wallace's lack of support may lead her reader to question the validity of her entire argument as he may see these possibilities.