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Rubric Category	Development
Grade/Score	Grades 6-12 / Scores 2 and 3
CCSS Writing Standards	W1, W1a, W1b, W1c
Argument Type	All arguments

# Connecting Claims and Evidence with Warrants

*Students practice writing different kinds of warrants by using different sentence starters and avoiding common errors.*

## Understanding the Expectations

*What is a warrant?*

Writing arguments, especially arguments about literary texts, involves making interesting and insightful claims and backing them up with evidence. A crucial part of ensuring claims are truly insightful and supported with evidence is explaining and analyzing the evidence to demonstrate its connection to the claim. That explanation and exploration of the connection between the claim and the evidence is called a warrant.

A warrant may take the following forms:

- A definition of an important term of what you are arguing, like what love means between two characters who are siblings.

- An assumption based on things that most people already know, like that good friends stick together through hardships. (Note: when you have warrants based on generalities that everybody already knows, you typically edit out those sentences during the revision process. They're not worth writing down because, well, everybody already knows them).
- Analysis of the details of the evidence in order to explain how they support and deepen the claim. Most of your time spent writing warrants about literary texts will fall into this third category.

While aspects of the warrant can appear anywhere in a paragraph, the most common place (and the place to focus if you're just starting out) is immediately after the evidence. As you learn to employ more sophisticated techniques, you can consider the ways you might begin the warrant before the evidence and continue it afterwards, or how you might write sentences that both establish a warrant and connect to the next piece of evidence.

#### *What isn't a warrant?*

As you work on writing interesting warrants and analysis of evidence, you may generate all kinds of ideas and thoughts. Generating these thoughts and getting them down on paper is an important part of the writing process, so even if you don't end up using something in the final draft of an essay, it can still be a good part of your process if it supports your thinking and helps you better understand what you want to say. You just have to make sure to remove it later on in the revising process.

As part of that revision process of getting to a final draft, you'll want to make sure that you keep and develop your really interesting warrants while deleting phrases and sentences that are unnecessary or redundant. For example, when you find that you've written a general statement about life that most people already agree with, like "true friends stick together," that can still be part of your argument, but you assume it instead of wasting space by writing it.

Another common issue occurs when you first try to write a warrant immediately after a relevant piece of evidence. You may find yourself restating the quotation or repeating the basic meaning of it. This is a useful part of the writing process, because it helps clarify your thinking. However, your audience has just read the

quotation or fact, so they do not need you to repeat the basic information immediately afterwards. You'll want to edit that out and get straight to the real warrant.

### *Playing the "Support and Deepen" Game*

1. Create a digital document or work in your notebook and list up to three potential overall claims for your essay. Then, review your notes to find at least one piece of evidence that could support each of those claims.
2. There are two basic ways to "play" Support and Deepen. One involves making sure your evidence clearly supports the claim with a basic warrant, and the other involves making your warrant more interesting and insightful by pushing yourself to dig more deeply into your ideas.
  - **The Basic Warrant:**
    - » Write down one of your claims and then the piece of evidence that goes with it.
    - » Next, write down this starter phrase: "This evidence **proves** my claim because..."
    - » Finish the phrase by explaining how the evidence proves your claim.
    - » Note: a starter phrase helps you clarify your thinking. It would be clunky to include it in a final draft, so once you have completed the sentence, **delete the starter phrase** and ensure the sentence flows smoothly from the evidence. If your warrant really focuses directly on explaining the evidence, it should flow nicely.
  - **Deepening the Warrant:**
    - » Write down one of your claims and then the piece of evidence that goes with it (or use the claim and evidence you just wrote a basic warrant for).
    - » Next, write down the starter phrase: "This evidence **makes my claim more interesting and insightful** because it shows us that..."
    - » Finish the phrase by explaining how specific facts, word choices, or character traits relate to your claim and help make it more interesting.
    - » **Note:** a starter phrase helps you clarify your thinking. It would be clunky to include it in a final draft, so once you have your sentence or sentences, **delete the starter phrase**, take the ideas you generated, and ensure they flow smoothly from your basic warrant without any redundancy.

3. Now look at the big picture from claim to evidence to warrant sentences. Make any necessary edits to help your reader see the sequence of logic and understanding between each piece. Try to avoid clunky phrases like “this quotation proves that” or “this quotation is another example of...” If your analysis is clear and direct, you won’t need clunky explanations like those.

These starter phrases are to help support you in making sure all of your claims and evidence have clear warrants and to push you to make your warrants more sharply analytical and insightful. You want each of your sentences to build your readers’ understanding to a deeper and more revealing level, with no time wasted stating the obvious.

## Writing It Up

Now, review the new or improved warrants you created and developed during the game. If you are early in the writing process, try writing a body paragraph based on the claim, evidence, and warrant you worked with during the game. If you are working on revising a completed draft, review your existing body paragraphs to ensure that all of your claims have clear warrants to explain their evidence. If they all have warrants already (good job!), pull out one of your paragraphs and focus on deepening the warrant for at least one piece of evidence.