

Rubric Category	Organization
Grade/Score	Grades 6-12 / Scores 3 and 4
Rubric Category	Development
Grade/Score	Grades 6-12 / Scores 3 and 4
CCSS Writing Standards	W1, W1a, W1b, W1c
Argument Type	Primarily literary

Varying Your Claim/Evidence/ Warrant Structure

Students learn a basic structure for a body paragraph and remix different options for structuring claim, evidence, and warrant.

Understanding the Expectations

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.

As you become more of an expert in your use of claims, evidence, and warrants, you will want to consider different ways of structuring your paragraphs. While there are some basic tried-and-true paragraph structures you can always fall back on when you're not sure what to do, part of being a sophisticated writer is finding creative ways to accomplish the goals of a paragraph based on what would be most effective for that particular claim, that particular piece of evidence, or that particular warrant.

For example, when you first start out writing body paragraphs for literary arguments, you will probably want to use this structure:

- A topic sentence composed of a claim that connects to the main claim or thesis of the essay.
- A sentence to introduce the evidence that supports that claim.
- The evidence, typically in the form of a direct quotation.
- A warrant that explains the connection between the evidence and the claim.
- A transition, either to the next piece of evidence for the same claim or to a new claim.

There is nothing wrong with this structure because it accomplishes all the important purposes of the paragraph. It gives us an interesting claim to consider, evidence to support and deepen that claim, and an explanation of how it all fits together.

However, as you gain confidence as a writer, a rigid structure like that can be confining, and it can get repetitive, both for your readers and for you as a writer. By keeping the goals of the paragraph in mind, you can play around with both the order of each piece of the paragraph as well as the shape each piece takes.

Playing the “Variations” Game

1. Create a digital document or work in your notebook and select (or write) one claim, a piece of evidence for that claim, and a warrant that explains how the evidence supports that claim. If you already have a full paragraph written, that’s even better, but if you don’t, all you really need is a claim, a piece of evidence, and a warrant.
2. Write a simple paragraph according to the basic structure outlined above. You already have most of the pieces, so it’s simply a matter of assembling them and making sure each piece flows into the next. Don’t forget to make sure to introduce or blend your quotation instead of just dropping it

in after the claim.

3. Once you are happy that you have a solid, basic paragraph, choose one of these options to play around with your paragraph's structure:
 - a. Option #1: Remix Your Warrant
 - i. Look at the introduction to the evidence and the warrant. Explaining a little of the warrant before the evidence arrives can be a good way to make your evidence even more clear and persuasive. Choose one phrase or idea from the warrant and move it to the sentence before the evidence.
 - ii. Revise to make sure the sentences still flow clearly from one to the next.
 - iii. Your quotation now appears a little later in your paragraph. Compare your remixed paragraph to your original. Which one is more efficient? Which one is clearer? Which one would be more interesting to your readers? Select the one you like better to include in your draft as you revise.
 - b. Option #2: Remix Your Claim.
 - i. Look at the sentences in your paragraph that come before the first piece of evidence. Sometimes it can be more effective to try to get to the evidence as quickly as possible. Take your claim and the sentences that introduce the evidence and condense them down to two sentences (if they're already only two sentences, see if you can blend in your quotation before the end of the second sentence.
 - ii. You may need to move some explanation or information after the quotation, or you may need to edit out information that isn't truly crucial.
 - iii. Revise to make sure the sentences still flow clearly from one to the next.
 - iv. Your quotation now appears a bit earlier in the paragraph. Compare your remixed paragraph to your original. Which one is more efficient? Which one is clearer? Which one would be more interesting to your readers? Select the one you like better to include in your draft as you revise.

These two games are just two variations on the universe of things you can do to make a paragraph truly original, efficient, and interesting. Keep in mind your priorities (claim, evidence, and warrant), as well as your audience, and you can bend all kinds of rules as you discover ways to make your point while making your writing uniquely your own.

Writing It Up

Now, review the different versions of the paragraphs you created during the game. If you are early in the writing process, consider revising one of the versions you created and continuing on to write another body paragraph that bends the rules. If you are working on revising a completed draft, find a paragraph that you feel isn't as effective as it could be and try writing a different version where you play around with the structure of your priorities.