Supporting Paragraphs using AXES

A.X.E.S. is an acronym for **A**ssertion, E**X**ample, **E**xplanation, and **S**ignificance. This word can help you remember the types of elements that generally belong in body paragraphs. Throughout your paper, each sentence should relate back to your thesis statement to prove, argue, or otherwise support your claim.

A

Assertion: (the "topic sentence" or main point)

Assertions are like mini-thesis statements that explain what the body paragraph will be about, and make a specific point. They are not summaries or general statements. These are usually only one sentence.

X

eXample: (the "concrete detail")

The example is just as it sounds. It is the evidence that you will use to support your assertion. Examples can be direct quotes or a brief paraphrase of the text you are using. Remember to **always** cite your sources and introduce your quotations with signal phrases, such as, "According to…" Also remember that your example cannot make your point for you, and will need to be explained.

E

Explanation: (the "commentary" or "analysis")

The explanation will show the reader how the example is supporting the assertion. This is your analysis. If you are using a long example, make sure to explain *all* of it. The explanation section should be *about* twice as long as your example, and should make up a majority of your paragraph. This is where you argue your point in detail.

S

Significance: (the "relevance" to the paper)

The significance of the paragraph explains how everything you just proved in your specific example is still related back to the overall thesis of your paper. You do not have to refer to your *whole* thesis, but rather the *most relevant* part of it. This is usually about one to two sentences.

AXES Paragraphs

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Note: If you wanted to use two examples in your paragraph, use **AXEXES**, making sure to always **Explain** your **eXample** thoroughly. A paragraph with one example will be *about* 5-8 sentences long, and a paragraph with two examples will be *about* 8-14 sentences long. If you feel like you have a lot to explain about a particular example, have a full AXES paragraph for that example instead of trying to fit two examples into one paragraph.

Information compiled from Mira Costa Community College & CSUSM Writing Center resources