ENGLISH COMPOSITION · STUDY GUIDE

Exam 3 Study Guide

This guide covers chapters 5 and 6. First you will work on the paragraph: the block a reader actually processes, and how to make it unified, developed and coherent. Then you will learn what counts as evidence, which kind settles which claim, and how to report numbers and experience honestly. Work one chapter at a time. Read the "what to know" paragraphs, copy the tables by hand, then try each worked case with the steps covered. Finish each chapter with its ten self-test items. The cram sheet at the end puts every test in one place.

WHAT THIS GUIDE COVERS

- Chapter 5 · what a break signals, length by idea and genre, topic sentences and controlling ideas, the drift test and cut, subordinate or split, claim, evidence and explanation (PIE), seven patterns of development, the so-what close, old-to-new order, topic strings, transitions, cohesion versus coherence, openings, hinges and the paragraph-level reverse outline.
- Chapter 6 · assertion versus evidence, six evidence types and their limits, audience-relative evidence, five claim types (fact, definition, cause, value, policy), the analysis sentence, warrants, the STAR audit, sufficiency, counterevidence and cherry-picking, relative versus absolute change, percent versus percentage point, mean versus median, correlation and cause, and experience as evidence.

CHAPTER 5

Paragraphs, Unity and Coherence

Read it in full: **Chapter 5 in the textbook**. Practice it in the lab: **The Drift Test** and **The Sentence Chain**.

What to know

The paragraph is the chunk a reader processes: big enough to hold a complete thought, small enough to hold in working memory. A **paragraph break** is a claim about your structure: one idea has finished and another begins. Readers believe that signal, so a single block holding three ideas tells them there is only one, and a page of one-sentence paragraphs reads as breathless.

Length follows the idea, not a rule like "five sentences." It depends on how complex the idea is, how skeptical the reader is, and how the text will be read. Rough ranges from the chapter: academic essay 100 to 200 words; discussion post 40 to 90 words; professional email one to three sentences; journalism one to two sentences; clinical documentation follows the template. The test is "has this idea been finished?" State the paragraph's claim in one sentence. If you cannot, it holds more than one. If you can and the paragraph is three lines, the claim has no support. Draft in lumps, then find the paragraph inside the lump during revision.

A **topic sentence** states the paragraph's claim, and its **controlling idea** is the part that constrains what belongs. In "Night shift damages nurses in ways a fatigue policy cannot fix," the controlling idea is "in ways a fatigue policy cannot fix." Topic sentences should assert, not announce. Strong ones contain a word a reader could push back on: worsen, less than, neglected, collapse. "Another important factor is cost" is a list marker, not a claim.

Unity means every sentence develops the controlling idea. The **drift test**: underline the topic sentence, then ask of each sentence whether it advances *this* claim, not merely whether it is related. Drift has three repairs: **cut** (the idea does no work anywhere), **subordinate** (it supports the claim, so demote it into a clause), or **split** (it deserves its own paragraph). Richard Braddock's 1974 study reported that only a minority of professional paragraphs open with an explicit topic sentence; his method has been debated. Still, every paragraph has a controlling idea, and a student who cannot state it has not earned the right to leave it implied.

Development moves a reader from doubt to assent. The workhorse is claim, evidence, explanation, also taught as **PIE** (point, illustration, explanation). Writers reliably skip the explanation, the sentences that name the mechanism, rule out a weaker reading and draw the consequence. Evidence never speaks for itself. A rough working ratio: at least two lines of your own explanation for every line of quoted or cited material, or you have a scrapbook, not an argument.

Patterns of development give "add more detail" a shape, each answering a reader question: illustration (like what?), comparison and contrast (how does it differ?), cause and effect (why, and what follows?), definition (what exactly do you mean?), process (how does it unfold?), classification (what kinds?), problem and solution (what should be done?). Most real paragraphs

blend two. Close on a **so-what sentence** that names a consequence, narrows the claim or hands off, not a restatement. Do not end on a quotation; use the **quote sandwich** so you open and close the paragraph.

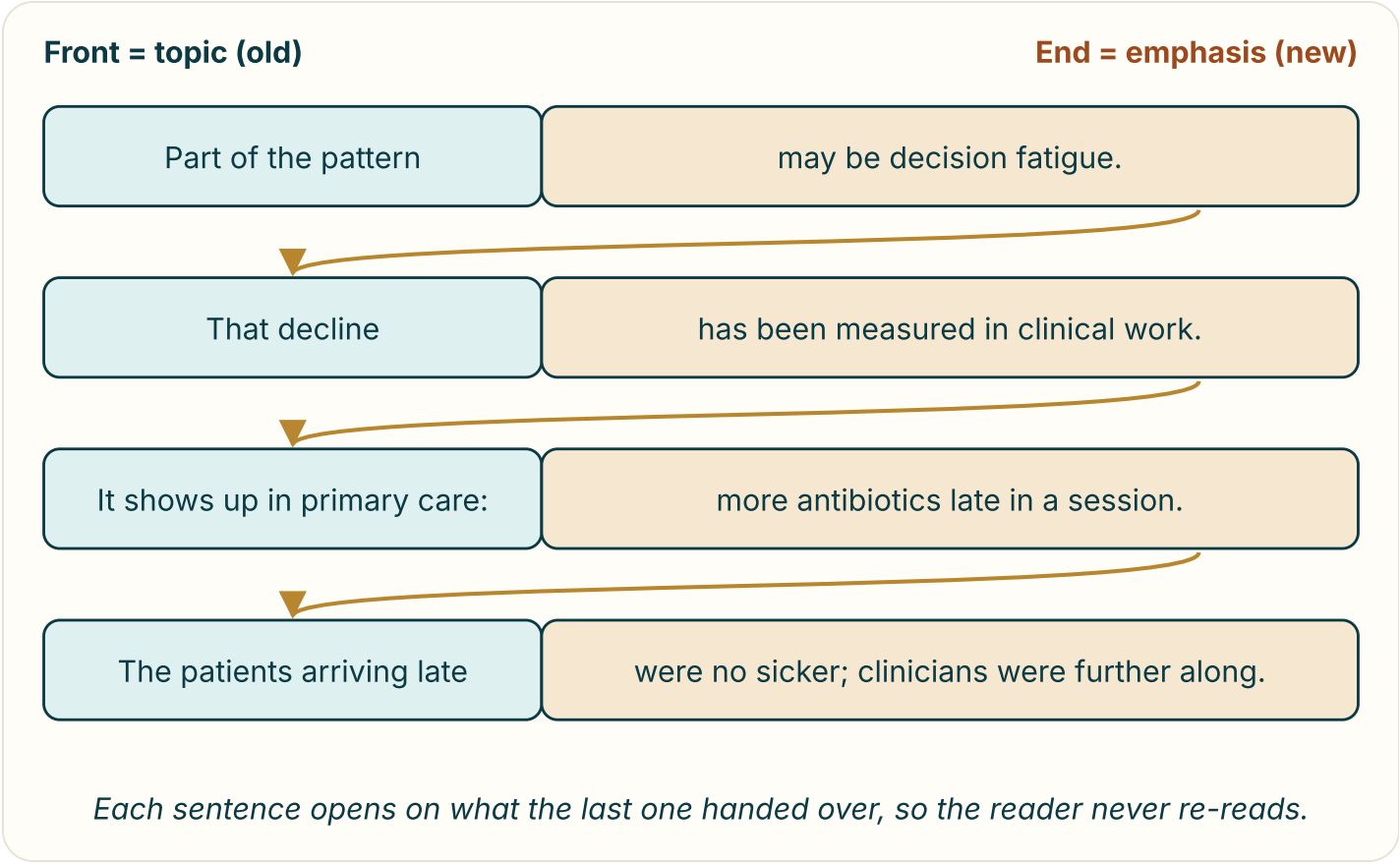
Coherence is mostly ordering. The **old-to-new principle** (the given-new contract) says a sentence should begin with what the reader already has and end with what is new; English readers treat the front as the topic and the end as the emphasis. At paragraph scale, check the **topic string**: list the grammatical subjects in a column. One cast of characters feels steady; four unrelated nouns in four sentences means the paragraph keeps changing the subject. Passives often scatter the string by hiding the actors.

A **transition** names a logical relationship: addition, contrast, concession, cause and result, example, restatement, sequence, conclusion. A transition that promises a contrast the content does not deliver misleads. Quieter glue works harder: repeat key terms rather than cycling synonyms (**elegant variation** confuses readers), keep pronoun reference clear, and use **parallelism**. **Cohesion** is local, the links between adjacent sentences. **Coherence** is global, the sense that the paragraph adds up to one thing. A paragraph can be cohesive and incoherent, so connectives cannot rescue it. If every sentence needs a transition, reorder first.

Openings and closings are still paragraphs. Skip the universal opener ("Since the beginning of time"). An opening puts the reader in the specific situation, shows why there is a question, and states or points to the claim. A conclusion says what follows or changes; naming a real limitation reads as confidence. A **hinge sentence** looks back with a subordinate clause and steps forward with the main clause. If you cannot write one, the paragraphs are probably misordered. Read only the first sentences straight through: that is the skimming reader's essay. Run a paragraph-level reverse outline (claim plus job for each) to find two-claim paragraphs, repeats, stacked evidence and lists posing as arguments. Genre changes the rules: claim first in discussion posts, the request first in email, templates in clinical notes.

LOCK THESE IN

- A paragraph break claims one idea has ended. Length follows the idea.
- Topic sentences assert; announcements cannot be wrong and impose no discipline.
- Drift test: does it advance this claim? Repairs: cut, subordinate, split.
- Claim, evidence, explanation (PIE). Explanation is the move writers skip.
- Seven patterns: illustration, comparison, cause, definition, process, classification, problem and solution.
- Old-to-new: familiar at the front, new at the end. Keep a steady topic string.
- Cohesion is local; coherence is global. Transitions cannot fix incoherence.
- Hinge = look back (subordinate clause) + step forward (main clause).



Old information first, new information last. The new end of each sentence becomes the familiar start of the next. Reverse the order and every sentence makes the reader reorient.

Patterns of development

Pattern	Reader question	Signal language
Illustration	Like what? Show me one.	for example, consider, in one case
Comparison and contrast	How does this differ from what I know?	whereas, by contrast, similarly, unlike
Cause and effect	Why does this happen? What follows?	because, as a result, consequently
Definition	What exactly do you mean by that word?	means, refers to, is not to be confused with
Process or sequence	How does it unfold, step by step?	first, next, at that point, finally
Classification	What kinds are there, on what basis?	one type, a second category, the remainder
Problem and solution	What should be done, and will it work?	the difficulty is, one remedy, this would require

The moves inside a developed paragraph

Move	Question it answers	Failure signature
Claim	What is this paragraph arguing?	Announces a subject; the paragraph sprawls
Context or setup	What does the reader need first?	Half the paragraph is throat-clearing
Evidence	What makes this more than opinion?	Three quotations in a row, or an unsourced statistic
Explanation	What does it mean, and how does it support the claim?	Skipped; the quotation is treated as self-evident
So-what	Why carry this forward?	Restates the topic sentence

Transitions by relationship

Relationship	Connectives	Use it when
Addition	also, moreover, in addition	The next point is parallel and equal in weight
Contrast	but, however, by contrast	The next point genuinely opposes the last
Concession	admittedly, granted, to be fair	You concede something real before answering
Cause and result	because, therefore, as a result	One produces the other, and you can defend it
Restatement	that is, in other words	A precise sentence needs a plain version

Worked cases

WORKED CASE 1 · RUNNING THE DRIFT TEST AND REPAIRING IT

Topic sentence: "Free campus shuttles fail riders who work evenings." The paragraph continues: (2) The last shuttle leaves at 6:15 p.m. (3) Most evening classes end after 9 p.m. (4) Parking permits also rose 12 percent this year. (5) Electric shuttles are quieter than diesel ones.

STEP 1 · UNDERLINE THE CLAIM

The controlling idea is "fail riders who work evenings."

STEP 2 · TEST EACH SENTENCE

Sentences 2 and 3 advance it: the schedule misses evening riders. Sentence 4 is about parking cost, a related but different claim. Sentence 5 is about engines, a new claim.

STEP 3 · CHOOSE THE REPAIR FOR 4

It explains why evening riders cannot simply drive, so **subordinate** it: "...and with permits up 12 percent this year, driving is no easy fallback."

STEP 4 · CHOOSE THE REPAIR FOR 5

Engine noise does no work for this paper. **Cut** it.

STEP 5 · ADD THE MISSING EXPLANATION

"The schedule was built for a daytime campus, so the students with the fewest options are the ones it strands." The paragraph now says one thing and explains it.

WORKED CASE 2 · FIXING A TOPIC STRING WITH OLD-TO-NEW ORDER

Weak: "A new tutoring schedule was adopted by the writing center in January. Longer evening hours were requested by commuter students. Staffing the late shift was the main concern of the director. A volunteer roster was eventually created by graduate students."

STEP 1 · LIST THE SUBJECTS

Schedule, hours, staffing, roster: four centers in four sentences, and the people who acted are buried in by-phrases.

STEP 2 · PICK ONE CAST

The writing center, then commuter students, then the director and the graduate students, kept as actors.

STEP 3 · REORDER OLD TO NEW

"The writing center changed its tutoring schedule in January. Commuter students had asked it for longer evening hours. The director worried about staffing a late shift, so graduate students built a volunteer roster to cover it."

STEP 4 · CHECK THE HANDOFFS

Each sentence opens on something the previous one introduced: the center, the hours, the late shift.

STEP 5 · NOTE THE SIDE EFFECT

Three hidden-actor passives disappeared. Passives are not wrong, but here they scattered the string.

WORKED CASE 3 · WRITING A HINGE BETWEEN TWO PARAGRAPHS

Paragraph 4 shows that textbook costs push students to skip buying books. Paragraph 5 opens: "Another problem is access codes." Write a hinge.

STEP 1 · NAME THE RELATIONSHIP

Access codes are worse than plain books: they cannot be borrowed or bought used. That is an escalation, not an addition.

STEP 2 · BUILD THE LOOK-BACK CLAUSE

"If high prices push students to skip the book,"

STEP 3 · BUILD THE STEP-FORWARD CLAUSE

"access codes remove even that option, because a code cannot be shared, borrowed or resold."

STEP 4 · JOIN THEM

"If high prices push students to skip the book, access codes remove even that option, because a code cannot be shared, borrowed or resold."

STEP 5 · CHECK THE LOGIC

The hinge ranks the two problems instead of listing them. **If no hinge can be written, the paragraphs are probably in the wrong order.**

TRAPS PEOPLE FALL INTO

- **Writing to a sentence count.** Ask whether the idea is finished, not whether you reached five sentences.
- **Announcing instead of asserting.** "In this paragraph I will discuss..." is a table of contents, not a claim.
- **Asking "is it related?"** Almost everything is related. Ask whether it advances this claim.
- **Letting evidence speak for itself.** It never does. Write the explanation.
- **Closing on a quotation.** That gives the last word to the source. Interpret it in your own voice.
- **Cycling synonyms for elegance.** Readers wonder if "adherence" and "compliance" mean different things. Repeat the key term.
- **Adding transitions to fix coherence.** Connectives make cohesion. Reorder the sentences first.
- **Writing essay paragraphs everywhere.** Discussion posts, email and chart notes have their own paragraph conventions.

Chapter 5 self-test · ten items

1. What does a paragraph break tell a reader?

A. That the writer has reached five complete sentences
B. That one idea has ended and a new one begins
C. That the next sentence will contain a direct quotation
D. That the reader may now skim the following section

B. That one idea has ended and a new one begins Readers trust that signal, so a break in the wrong place misrepresents your structure.

2. Which is a topic sentence that asserts rather than announces?

A. In this paragraph I will discuss the overall cost of the new program
B. Cost objections collapse once readmission penalties are counted
C. Another important factor in this whole debate is cost
D. Cost is something that many people talk about today

B. Cost objections collapse once readmission penalties are counted It contains a word a reader could push back on ("collapse"). The others announce or list.

3. In "Night shift damages nurses in ways a fatigue policy cannot fix," what is the controlling idea?

A. In ways a fatigue policy cannot fix
B. Night shift as the general topic
C. Nurses as the group being discussed
D. Damages as the main verb alone

A. In ways a fatigue policy cannot fix The controlling idea is the assertion that constrains what belongs in the paragraph.

4. A sentence supports your claim but is written as if it were its own claim. Which repair fits?

A. Cut it from the paper entirely right away
B. Split it into its own separate paragraph
C. Move it to the very end of the conclusion
D. Subordinate it into a dependent clause

D. Subordinate it into a dependent clause Subordinating lets the idea serve the claim instead of competing with it.

5. In the claim, evidence, explanation pattern, which move do beginning writers skip most?

A. The claim
B. The evidence
C. The topic
D. Explanation

D. Explanation Evidence is inert until you say what it shows and how it supports the claim.

6. A paragraph claims hospice and palliative care are often confused. Which pattern fits best?

A. Process or sequence steps
B. Classification into kinds
C. Comparison and contrast
D. Illustration by one example

C. Comparison and contrast The reader's question is how the two differ, which is what comparison and contrast answers.

7. What does the old-to-new principle say?

A. Begin each sentence with the newest and most surprising fact
B. Put every transition word at the very end of each sentence
C. Open each paragraph with information from older sources
D. Begin with familiar information and end with what is new

D. Begin with familiar information and end with what is new English readers treat the front of a sentence as the topic and the end as the emphasis.

8. A paragraph links every sentence to its neighbor yet adds up to nothing. It has:

A. Coherence without any unity
B. Unity without any cohesion
C. Cohesion without coherence
D. Too few topic sentences in it

C. Cohesion without coherence Cohesion is local; coherence is global. That is why adding connectives cannot fix it.

9. What is a hinge sentence?

A. An opening sentence that looks back and steps forward
B. A closing sentence that restates the paragraph's claim
C. A transition word placed at the start of each sentence
D. A quotation that joins two paragraphs on one subject

A. An opening sentence that looks back and steps forward Usually a subordinate clause looks back and the main clause opens the new idea.

10. A reverse outline shows two paragraphs with nearly the same claim sentence. What does that mean?

A. You are circling, not advancing
B. The thesis is too narrow overall
C. The paragraphs need more quotations
D. The conclusion is placed too early

A. You are circling, not advancing Merge them, or sharpen one into a genuinely different point.

CHAPTER 6

Evidence and Support

Read it in full: **Chapter 6 in the textbook**. Practice it in the lab: **The Evidence Dispatcher** and **The Analysis Slot**.

What to know

An **assertion** is a statement offered without support: a promissory note. Every thesis and topic sentence is one. **Evidence** redeems it: material a reader can inspect, count, look up or reread without taking your word for it. Point at a sentence and ask what a reader could check. "The new orientation program has been very successful" asks for trust. "Nineteen of twenty-two nurses who finished the new program were still on the unit a year later, against eleven of twenty-four under

the old one" hands the reader something. Intensifiers like very, clearly and obviously often mark the spots where the paper is running on fumes.

Six families of evidence, each with a ceiling. **Empirical data** establish that a pattern exists, but not why anyone should care. **Textual evidence** shows what a document says, but not how readers received it. **Expert testimony** transfers credibility, but cannot replace the expert's reasoning or settle a value dispute. **Cases and examples** make a mechanism visible, but one case is one case. **Anecdotal evidence** shows that something happens at all, but not how often. **Analogy and precedent** make a case plausible and never prove it. More citations is not more evidence; the content is the evidence, not the punctuation.

Evidence is **audience-relative**. That is not relativism about truth; it is a fact about persuasion. The evidence you need is whatever stands between what your reader will grant for free and what you want them to accept. Fellow nurses already grant that fatigue is real; a chief financial officer grants it too but disputes whether fixing it pays, so that reader needs costs.

Ancient rhetoric called the points where arguments stall the **stases**. The modern version has five **claim types**. **Fact** (is it so?) is settled by records and measurement. **Definition** (what kind of thing is it?) by criteria plus a case that meets them. **Cause** (what produced it?) by correlation plus mechanism, time order, a comparison group and ruled-out alternatives. **Value** (good or bad?) by criteria the audience accepts. **Policy** (what should we do?) needs the problem, its cause, the stakes and a feasible remedy. Before searching, fill in: "If I found ___, I would have to concede I was wrong." When the evidence fits a smaller claim, there are three honest moves: narrow the claim, find the right evidence, or name the limit.

The **dropped quotation** and the **orphan statistic** are evidence with no sentence after them. Readers left alone with evidence interpret it the way they already believed. The **analysis** sentence states what the evidence shows and why that supports the claim, and it must contain an idea the evidence does not. If it could be replaced by "as you can see above," it is restatement. Acronyms like PEEL, TEAL, ICE and MEAL share one shape: claim, evidence, analysis, significance. Instructors disagree about formulas; treat the four moves as a diagnostic, and never omit the analysis.

The **warrant** (Toulmin) is the unstated assumption that lets evidence count. Join evidence and claim with "because" and ask what must be true for the joint to hold. If a reader accepts all your facts and still rejects your conclusion, the warrant is unshared, and more facts will not help; argue for the assumption itself. Ignaz Semmelweis in 1840s Vienna had the numbers on handwashing, but colleagues largely rejected them, partly because he could not supply a mechanism they would accept.

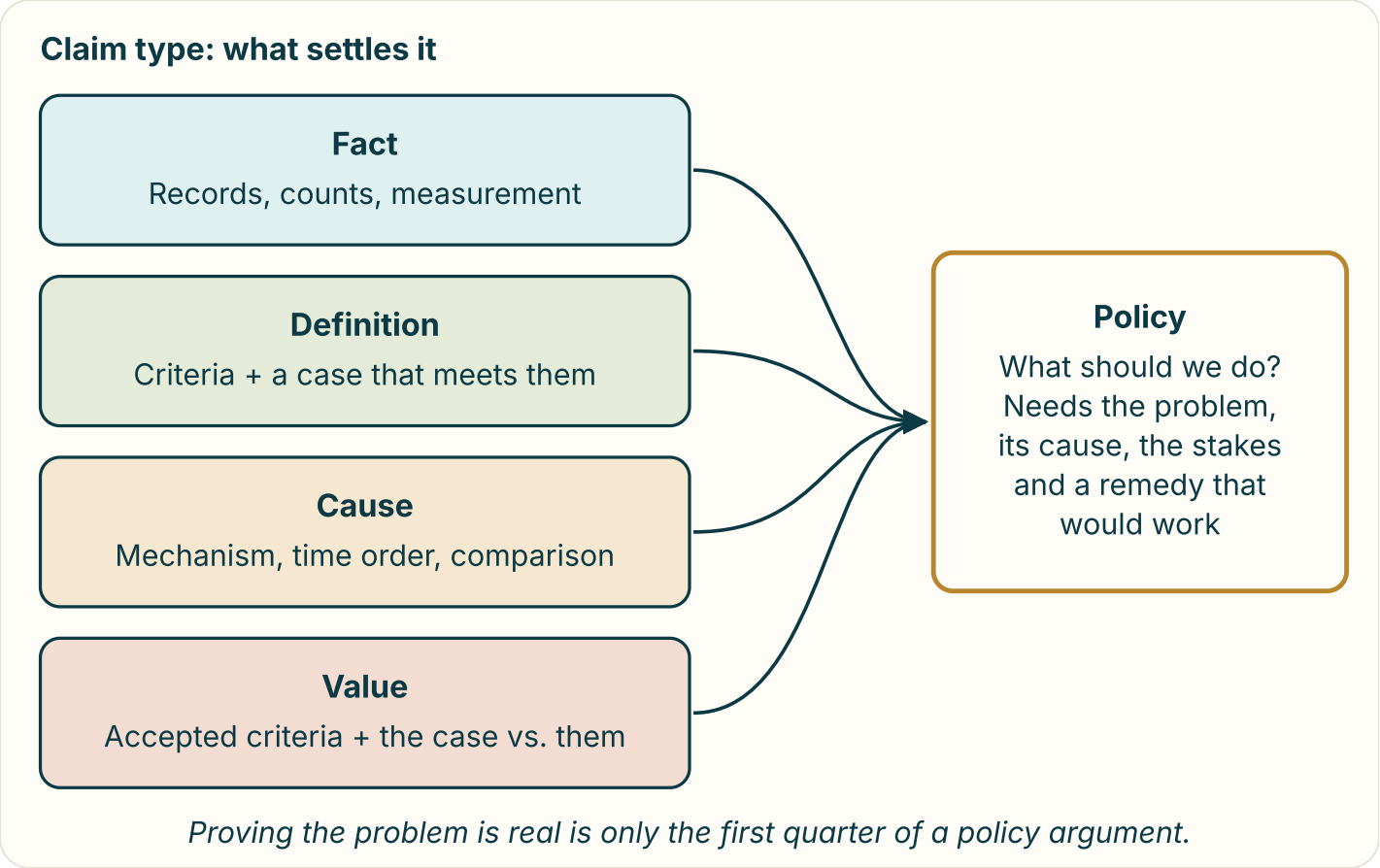
Audit support with **STAR**: **sufficiency** (enough for a claim this size?), **typicality** (representative, or just memorable?), **accuracy** (correct, current, with its original qualifications?), **relevance** (does it bear on this claim or a neighboring one?). Sufficiency has no fixed number: James Lind's 1747 scurvy trial gave twelve sailors six treatments, two men each, far too few to be conclusive, while a huge modern trial can detect an effect too small to matter. Match the reach of your sentence to the reach of your support. **Cherry-picking** is usually unintentional; spend a fixed block, about twenty minutes, hunting the strongest evidence against you, and raise it right after your best evidence.

Ask every number four questions: percent of what, measured when, in whom, compared with what. Know three distinctions. **Relative versus absolute change**: risk falling from two in a thousand to one in a thousand is a 50 percent relative cut but one tenth of one percentage point absolute. **Percent versus percentage point**: 4 percent to 6 percent is two percentage points and a 50 percent rise. **Mean versus median**: in skewed data a few extreme values pull the mean, so the median shows the ordinary case. **Correlation** becomes causal evidence only with a mechanism, time order, a comparison group and ruled-out **confounds** (ice cream sales and drownings rise together because of summer).

Experience is strong evidence for **existence** (this happens), **mechanism** (here is how it unfolds), **stakes** (here is the cost) and practice conditions outsiders misdescribe. It cannot establish frequency or cause on its own, or stand in for a population. Scholars genuinely disagree here: one tradition argues that excluding lived experience enforces a narrow standard that disadvantages students whose knowledge came from work and community; another holds that generalizable claims need generalizable evidence. The workable practice is to use experience where its logic fits, mark it as one case, and pair it with systematic evidence when the claim reaches further.

LOCK THESE IN

- Evidence = what a reader can check without trusting you. Assertions promise; evidence pays.
- Six evidence types, each with a ceiling: data, text, expert, case, anecdote, analogy.
- Five claim types: fact, definition, cause, value, policy. Policy needs the other four.
- The analysis sentence adds an idea the evidence does not contain.
- Facts accepted but conclusion rejected = unshared warrant. Argue the assumption.
- STAR: sufficiency, typicality, accuracy, relevance.
- 4% to 6% = 2 percentage points = 50% relative rise. Skewed data: use the median.
- Experience carries existence, mechanism and stakes, not frequency or cause.



Match the evidence to the claim. Each claim type is settled by its own kind of support. A policy claim stands on all four of the others.

Evidence types and their limits

Type	Strongest for	Cannot do
Empirical data	That something is so, at what scale, how it changed	Establish meaning, value or obligation
Textual evidence	What a document says, implies or omits	Show effects on readers or the author's intent
Expert testimony	Technical judgment you cannot make	Settle a value dispute; replace the reasoning
Case or example	Making a mechanism visible	Prove frequency
Anecdote	That something happens at all; texture and stakes	Support claims about how often
Analogy or precedent	Transferring a pattern; untested proposals	Prove anything; it only makes a case plausible

Claim types and what settles them

Claim type	Question	Settled by
Fact	Did it happen? How much?	Records, measurements, counts, corroboration
Definition	What kind of thing is this?	Stated criteria plus a case shown to meet them
Cause	What produced this?	Correlation + mechanism, time order, comparison, alternatives ruled out
Value	Is it good, bad, better, worse?	Criteria the audience accepts, then the case measured against them
Policy	What should we do?	The problem, its cause, the stakes and a feasible remedy

Reading numbers honestly

Misleading form	What it hides	Honest form
"Cuts your risk by half"	The tiny baseline	"From about 2 in 1,000 to about 1 in 1,000"
"Complaints jumped 300 percent"	The denominator	"Complaints rose from four to sixteen"
"Average salary is $92,000"	Skew from a few high earners	Report the median, $58,000
"Unemployment rose 2 percent"	Points or percent?	"From 4.0 to 6.0 percent: two percentage points"
"Tutored students earned higher grades"	Self-selection	Note they entered with higher GPAs

Worked cases

WORKED CASE 1 · MATCHING EVIDENCE TO A CLAIM TYPE

Leah wants to argue "The county should extend library hours to 9 p.m." Her only evidence is a petition with 600 signatures. What else does a policy claim need?

STEP 1 · NAME THE CLAIM TYPE

Policy. It needs fact, cause, value and feasibility support.

STEP 2 · FACT

Is there a problem? Door counts showing how many people arrive in the last hour before the current 6 p.m. closing.

STEP 3 · CAUSE

Why does the need exist? Evidence that many residents work until 5:30 and cannot arrive earlier.

STEP 4 · VALUE

Why is it worth fixing? Criteria the board accepts, such as equal access for working residents.

STEP 5 · FEASIBILITY AND VERDICT

Staff cost for three extra hours and a comparable library that did it. **The petition shows demand exists; it covers only part of the first quarter of the job.**

WORKED CASE 2 · TURNING A DROPPED QUOTATION INTO ANALYSIS

Draft: "The gym's ad is about fun. It says, 'No judgment, just music and friends.' This shows the gym is fun."

STEP 1 · SHARPEN THE CLAIM

"The ad sells social comfort rather than fitness."

STEP 2 · MAKE THE EVIDENCE SPECIFIC

"The tagline reads 'No judgment, just music and friends,' and none of its six photos shows anyone using equipment."

STEP 3 · TEST THE OLD ANALYSIS

"This shows the gym is fun" could be replaced by "as you can see." It is restatement.

STEP 4 · WRITE REAL ANALYSIS

"By promising 'no judgment' before anything about exercise, the ad treats embarrassment, not cost or time, as the barrier keeping people out."

STEP 5 · ADD SIGNIFICANCE

"For a reader anxious about being watched, that is the right promise; for one who wants results, the ad offers nothing." **The analysis now contains an idea the quotation does not.**

WORKED CASE 3 · REPORTING NUMBERS HONESTLY

A flyer claims: "Late library returns rose 50 percent!" The late-return rate went from 4 percent to 6 percent. A second claim says the "average" wait at the help desk is 27 minutes; the seven recorded waits were 12, 14, 15, 15, 18, 20 and 95 minutes.

STEP 1 · PERCENTAGE POINTS

6 − 4 = **2 percentage points**.

STEP 2 · RELATIVE CHANGE

2 ÷ 4 = 0.50, a **50 percent** relative rise. Both are true; the flyer chose the louder one.

STEP 3 · THE MEAN

12 + 14 + 15 + 15 + 18 + 20 + 95 = 189 minutes; 189 ÷ 7 = **27 minutes**.

STEP 4 · THE MEDIAN

Sorted, the middle (fourth) value is **15 minutes**. One 95-minute wait drags the mean far above the ordinary case.

STEP 5 · HONEST SENTENCES

"The late-return rate rose from 4 to 6 percent, two percentage points." "The typical (median) wait was 15 minutes; one 95-minute wait pulled the mean to 27."

TRAPS PEOPLE FALL INTO

- **Counting citations as evidence.** Four parenthetical citations with no specifics are still an assertion.
- **Using data to settle a value claim.** No quantity tells anyone what ought to matter. Value needs criteria.
- **Restating instead of analyzing.** If "as you can see above" could replace it, it is restatement.
- **Adding facts when the warrant is the problem.** If the reader accepts the facts and rejects the claim, argue the assumption.
- **Mixing up percent and percentage point.** 4% to 6% is two points and a 50% rise.
- **Quoting the mean of skewed data.** A few extreme values drag the mean. Use the median for the typical case.
- **Treating correlation as cause.** Check reverse cause, confounds and chance first.
- **Asking one case to prove frequency.** Experience carries existence, mechanism and stakes.

Chapter 6 self-test · ten items

1. What question separates an assertion from a supported statement?

A. What here could a reader check without trusting me?
B. How many citations does this sentence currently contain?
C. Does this sentence contain a strong and confident adjective?
D. Would my instructor personally agree with this sentence?

A. What here could a reader check without trusting me? Evidence is material a reader can inspect independently of the writer's confidence.

2. Which evidence type can show that something happens at all but not how often?

A. Empirical survey data
B. Precedent from courts
C. Expert statistical review
D. Anecdotal evidence

D. Anecdotal evidence Individual experience establishes existence and stakes, not frequency.

3. Why can empirical data never settle a claim of value?

A. Data are always too old to be trusted in papers
B. Value claims are not allowed in academic writing
C. No quantity tells anyone what ought to matter
D. Data can only be used for definitional claims

C. No quantity tells anyone what ought to matter A value claim needs criteria the audience accepts, then evidence the case meets them.

4. "The county should fund a co-responder team" is which claim type?

A. Fact
B. Policy
C. Definition
D. Value only

B. Policy Policy claims say what should be done and need fact, cause, value and feasibility support.

5. A writer claims overtime causes medication errors but cites a survey on nurses feeling less safe. Which STAR test fails?

A. Relevance
B. Sufficiency
C. Typicality
D. Readability

A. Relevance The evidence measures perception, which supports a neighboring claim, not error rates.

6. A reader accepts every fact in your paragraph and still rejects your conclusion. What is the problem?

A. Too few statistics
B. An unshared warrant
C. A missing citation page
D. An overlong topic sentence

B. An unshared warrant More facts will not help. Argue for the connecting assumption.

7. A rate moves from 4 percent to 6 percent. Which statement is correct?

A. It rose 2 percentage points, a 50 percent rise
B. It rose 2 percent, a 2 percentage point rise
C. It rose 50 percentage points, a 2 percent rise
D. It rose 6 percent, a 4 percentage point rise

A. It rose 2 percentage points, a 50 percent rise 6 − 4 = 2 percentage points; 2 ÷ 4 = 50 percent relative.

8. A drug lowers risk from 2 in 1,000 to 1 in 1,000. What is the absolute reduction?

A. 50 percentage points
B. 1 percentage point
C. 0.1 percentage point
D. 2 percentage points

C. 0.1 percentage point 2/1,000 is 0.2 percent and 1/1,000 is 0.1 percent, so the absolute drop is 0.1 point, even though the relative cut is 50 percent.

9. Where does the chapter suggest you place counterevidence you raise yourself?

A. In a short note in the final footnote
B. Only in the very first paragraph
C. Nowhere, since it weakens your case
D. Right after your strongest evidence

D. Right after your strongest evidence There the reader is already persuaded and a qualification costs you the least.

10. What can a single clinical observation legitimately support?

A. How often it happens across the nation
B. That something happens and how it unfolds
C. That one factor alone caused the outcome
D. What is true for the whole patient population

B. That something happens and how it unfolds Experience carries existence, mechanism and stakes. Frequency and cause need systematic evidence.

ONE PAGE

Cram sheet

Everything from chapters 5 and 6 in one place. Cover the right column and see if you can rebuild each row.

Paragraph tools

Tool	How it works	What it catches
One-sentence claim test	State the paragraph's claim in one sentence	Two claims in one block, or a claim with no support
Drift test	Does each sentence advance this claim?	Sentences that are related but off-claim
Cut, subordinate, split	Choose by how much the stray idea is worth	Repairs drift
Explanation ratio	Two lines of yours per line of source	Scrapbooks of quotations
Topic string	List the grammatical subjects	A paragraph that keeps changing the subject
First-sentence read	Read only first sentences straight through	A structure the skimming reader cannot follow
Paragraph reverse outline	Claim + job per paragraph	Repeats, stacked evidence, lists posing as arguments

Paragraph length by genre

Context	Typical paragraph
Academic essay	About 100 to 200 words; four to eight sentences
Discussion post	About 40 to 90 words; claim in the first line
Professional email or memo	One to three sentences; request first
Journalism and web copy	One to two sentences
Clinical or technical documentation	Structured entries set by the template

Evidence rules and numbers

Item	Rule	Example
STAR	Sufficiency, typicality, accuracy, relevance	One study cannot carry a claim about a whole field
Four questions for a number	Percent of what, when, in whom, compared with what	200% rise could be 1 to 3
Percentage point	Subtract the two percentages	4% to 6% = 2 points
Relative change	Change ÷ starting value	2 ÷ 4 = 50%
Absolute risk	Difference in actual risk	2/1,000 to 1/1,000 = 0.1 point
Mean vs median	Median for skewed data	Waits 12 to 95 min: mean 27, median 15
Correlation to cause	Add mechanism, time order, comparison, confounds ruled out	Ice cream and drownings: summer
Settle-it sentence	"If I found ___, I would concede"	Tells you what to search for

Rules that are not formulas

Topic	The rule
Topic sentence	Assert with a word a reader could push back on.
Coherence	Old to new inside sentences; one cast of subjects across the paragraph.
Transitions	Name a real relationship. Reorder before adding connectives.
Analysis	Add an idea the evidence does not contain.
Warrant	Facts accepted but conclusion rejected: argue the assumption.
Misfit evidence	Narrow the claim, find the right evidence, or name the limit.
Experience	Existence, mechanism, stakes; mark it as one case.

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