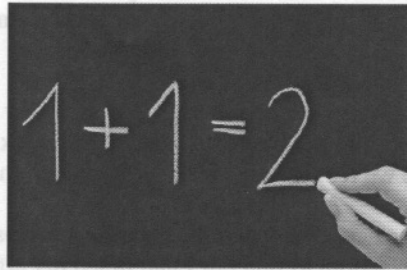


From Angst to Application:

How do we ensure that writing anxiety is replaced by clear, usable tools that give students the confidence to write efficiently and effectively in any situation?



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The Sentence Equation:

Subject + Verb

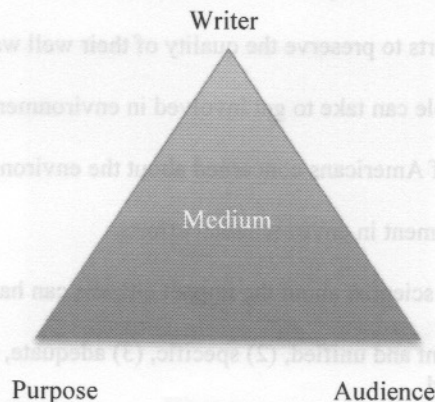
The Paragraph Equation:

Topic Sentence + Evidence (+ Summary Sentence)

The Essay Equation:

- Introduction: + Catchy First Line
Thesis Statement
- Each Body Paragraph: + Topic Sentence
Evidence
(+ Summary Sentence)
- Conclusion: + Thesis Statement
Catchy Last Line

Aristotle's Revised Rhetorical Triangle:



Effective Evidence: From “Always Evidence” to “Single-Moment Evidence”

Once you have decided what claim you will make about your topic, you must decide what supporting material will best demonstrate to your readers that you have good reason to believe what you do about your subject. **The more specific your evidence is, the more persuasive and memorable your claim will be.** The key here – regardless of the kind of writing you are doing, whether an anthropology term paper or an email to your boss – is to *show* your readers, rather than merely *tell* them.

Consider, for example, the following two paragraphs. Each begins with a clear topic sentence, followed by very specific evidence. Take note that the authors do not bother to explain and re-explain their ideas (telling), but instead offer specific, visual details (showing) so we readers can better identify with the claims they are making:

Talk about bad days: Today is a classic. First, I woke up to hear my parents screaming in my ear about a bill I have to pay. Then I went to school to find out I had failed my art project. After that, I called home to learn that I might have my license revoked, and the accident wasn't even my fault. Finally, while walking out of the cafeteria, I tripped over somebody's book bag and made myself look like a dimwit. And it's only two in the afternoon!

(Donna Amiano, “Bad Days”)

My life is full of risks. As a stair builder who works with heavy machinery, I risk cutting off a finger or a limb every day. Each Monday and Thursday, I risk four or five dollars on the state lottery. Every time I take my beat-up, 1981 Chevy Caprice Classic for a drive, I risk breaking down. However, the biggest risk I've ever taken was my decision to attend DeVry Institute this year.

(Kenneth Dwyer, “Risks”)

Evidence can mean a number of different kinds of support. *Examples* are just one option. To develop a thesis, you might also include any of the following:

- *Examples*
- *Reasons*
- *Facts*
- *Details*
- *Statistics*
- *Anecdotes*
- *Quotations from experts*

Imagine, for example, that you are writing an essay with the following thesis: **“People normally unconcerned about the environment will take action if they feel personally affected by an environmental problem.”** You could support this thesis with any combination of the following types of evidence:

- *Examples* of successful recycling efforts in several neighborhoods.
- *Reasons* why people got involved in a neighborhood recycling effort.
- *Facts* about other residents' efforts to preserve the quality of their well water.
- *Details* about the steps that people can take to get involved in environmental issues.
- *Statistics* showing the number of Americans concerned about the environment.
- An *anecdote* about your involvement in environmental efforts.
- A *quotation* from a well-known scientist about the impact citizens can have on environmental legislation.

Your evidence must always be (1) relevant and unified, (2) specific, (3) adequate, (4) accurate, (5) representative, and (6) if borrowed, properly documented.