PACKING A PUNCH: DEVELOPING WELL-SUPPORTED BODY PARAGRAPHS

PIE:

Point State the point you intend to make.

Illustration Illustrate your point—provide specific support (detailed examples, observations, case studies, statistics, statements from authorities, etc.).

Explanation Explain how your illustrations relate to the main idea (point) of the paragraph and to your thesis.

I. Questions to answer before writing a supporting paragraph

1. What is the main point I want to make in this paragraph?
   Write the main point (don’t worry about wording here, just the idea): ____________________________________________

2. What are two or three examples or illustrations I could use to start supporting this idea?
3. Why are these good examples; how might I use these examples in an interesting, original way?

   List the source citation for each example. Next, briefly justify why and/or how you might use each illustration:

   A. ________________________________________________________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________________________________________

   B. ________________________________________________________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________________________________________

   C. ________________________________________________________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________________________________________

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II. Questions to consider while writing a supporting paragraph

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point</th>
<th>Illustration</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Is the main idea of this paragraph original, clear, specific, and</td>
<td>2. Of the possible illustrations I listed above, which one is strongest</td>
<td>3. How does this example support the main point in a unique way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arguable/supportable?</td>
<td>example? (Depending on the assignment, you may use more than one.)</td>
<td>4. Is there missing information or are there any holes in the logic? If so,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>can I fill the gap(s)? how?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. What might someone else argue against this point? How can I address that side?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. Questions to ask when revising a supporting paragraph

In addition to answering these questions yourself, seeking the perspective of an outside reader like a peer, your instructor, or a WC tutor can help identify a paragraph’s strengths and weaknesses.

1. Does each sentence in the paragraph relate to the topic sentence?
   ___ Yes
   ___ No—if not, can the unrelated sentence(s) be eliminated or refocused to connect to the topic?

   Cross out any unrelated sentences and/or rewrite them here to include in the paragraph: ____________________________________________________________
                                                                                                                              ___________________________________________________________________
                                                                                                                              ____________________________________________________________
                                                                                                                              ___________________________________________________________________
                                                                                                                              ___________________________________________________________________
                                                                                                                              ___________________________________________________________________

2. Do I provide an effective illustration that is relevant to my topic sentence, specific and detailed for readers unfamiliar with the information, open to apply to my own reasoning/ideas, and from a reputable source?
   ___ Yes
   ___ No—if not, what anecdote, quotation, statistic, definition, or other outside example would more convincingly support my idea for my readers?

   Write out new sentences to present a new, stronger illustration (you may need to do additional research): ____________________________________________________________
                                                                                                                              ____________________________________________________________
                                                                                                                              ____________________________________________________________
                                                                                                                              ____________________________________________________________

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3. Do I clearly explain how and/or why the information in the example supports the main idea of the paragraph?
   ___ Yes
   ___ No—if not, think honestly about your reason for including this specific illustration. Is it simply to meet a requirement for quotations or citations? Do you completely understand the illustration and the source from which it came? If you answered yes to the requirement question or no to the comprehension question, go back to the previous question.

   Otherwise, provide your rationale for including the quotation and explain why it is meaningful for your point:
   _____________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________

4. Are there logical holes or unanswered questions that will weaken my argument?
   ___ No
   ___ Yes—if so, what gaps or questions need to be addressed?

   List the holes/questions and provide an answer or resolution that you can add to the paragraph:
   A. _____________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________
   B. _____________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________
   C. _____________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________

5. Does my explanation reflect on the example and topic in a way that is original and interesting so that I can make my own new point?
   ___ Yes
   ___ No—if not, what is your purpose in making a point that has already been made? In what new way could you look at the information in the example?

   Brainstorm a less-explored avenue to think about the illustration and make your point: ______________________________
   _____________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________

6. Does the paragraph as a whole clearly support the thesis of the paper?
   ___ Yes
   ___ No—if not, consider all of your points together and decide if the thesis needs modification or if the focus of the paragraph needs to change.

   Revise either the thesis or the topic sentence, making sure to tweak the illustration and explanation as appropriate:
   _____________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________