

# APE: The Case for Strong Paragraph Development

*Oftentimes, when writing, we are tempted to see the evidence itself as development but it's only a start. Consider a trial, where evidence is also central. In a trial no evidence is ever considered self evident--the lawyer has to...*

- *Make a case for its introduction*
- *Explain why it's a legitimate evidence*
- *Examine it: Is it what it appears to be? Is it accurate? How else could it be explained?*
- *Link it to other evidence in a logical way that calls for guilt or innocence.*

***In your essays, you need to find evidence, introduce it, explain it, and weave it into your big picture argument.***

## **ASSERTION:**

- The assertion (or topic sentence) states the specific arguable point you will make in the paragraph.
- Moreover, the assertion connects the paragraph to your thesis.
- Generally, assertions should go at the beginning of the paragraph (the first sentence, or, if there's a transition sentence, the second).
- Assertions must be arguable--the point that YOU are making about something.

## **PROOF:**

- The examples are the evidence that supports (or "proves") your assertion.
- These could be a direct quote from the text, a detailed description of a visual object, data, etc.
- Examples should be introduced and briefly contextualized.

## **EXPLANATION:**

- Examples NEVER speak for themselves: you must provide explanations, which clarify how and why the evidence relates to your assertion and subsequently your central claim.
- For instance, in a textual analysis, an explanation of a quote pulls out particular words, images, references, etc from the example and shows how these support the assertion.
- Explanation of examples and data outline the reasoning that logically links the evidence to the assertion.

***You're not just summarizing, you are explaining the significance ...***

- If you simply state, support and explain the assertions, your reader may respond with indifference unless you also tell them why they should care by showing the significance.
- Statements of significance anticipate and answer the question "So What?" In other words, why is the point made in the paragraph important in light of your thesis?
- Providing significance is crucial to making an argument that says something, has a purpose, or is interesting.