

AXES Handout: for support paragraphs only

THESIS STATEMENT

A

Assertion

An assertion (also known as a topic sentence) is your statement about the topic under consideration. Just as a thesis informs the reader of the topic of an essay, a good assertion lets the reader know the topic of a paragraph. An assertion should take a stand or make a claim about an issue. It should reveal your position on the topic. In addition, a topic sentence should warrant discussion; it should be a position or stand that is not obvious or self-explanatory. Remember, this is the only component of AXES that should almost always be one-sentence long. All other components need development past one sentence.

X

Example

An assertion requires proof or evidence. An example is a quote or passage from the reading that supports or proves your assertion. Your example should be a direct quote or paraphrase from the text. Select phrases or sentences that confirm (“back up”) your assertion.

E

Explanation

Examples (quotes) require explanation, that is, you must spell out or demonstrate how your example actually supports, or proves your assertion. A good explanation illustrates or shows how the quote confirms your claim.

S

Significance

Importance is a synonym for significance: so is consequence. Every paragraph should include a statement that tells the reader what makes your assertion important. Significance answers the question “So what?” It also shows how your assertion is related to real life. Your significance should tell the reader how this paragraph is significant to your thesis statement.