

A-E-C in Action

Assertion

Statement of opinion, interpretation, or judgment that supports the thesis (the controlling idea, tying together all other elements in the paper — assertions, evidence, and commentary).

Evidence

Statistics, examples, paraphrased information, facts, details, and/or direct quotes that provide specific support for the assertion.

Commentary

Explain and/or interpret evidence.

Make the connection between evidence and assertion and/or thesis statement.

Use your own words.

(This is the most important part of the paragraph! It demonstrates your critical thinking.)

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Example: Literary (Body Paragraph)

Assertion → Although in To Kill a Mockingbird Atticus Finch repeatedly emphasizes the importance of always being honest, ultimately he concedes that compassion for others may sometimes be more important than honesty.

Evidence → *After Bob Ewell is found stabbed to death, Atticus tells Heck Tate, “Nobody’s hushing this up. I don’t live that way” (273). However, when Tate insists that they “hush up” what happened, because “draggin’ [Boo Radley] with his shy ways into the limelight” (276) would be a sin, Atticus finally agrees. He tells Scout, “Mr. Ewell fell on his knife. Can you possibly understand?” (276).*

Commentary → He has decided to go along with Tate and cover up the truth about what really happened that night. He is grateful to Arthur Radley for saving his children and agrees with Tate that the kind of attention he would receive from the townspeople would make him embarrassed and uncomfortable. Atticus’s compassion for Arthur overrules his belief that one should always be honest and open.

Example: Non Literary (Body Paragraph)

Assertion → **The New P.E. system is a very positive idea, for in the end it produces no losers.** *It is mainly a team-building experience in a safe learning environment.*

Evidence → *In a New P.E. class, students will learn about their pulse rate by using heart rate monitors, which will let them know how hard they are working and what their target workout rate actually is. According to Donald Mahoney, a high school principal in California:*

The heart rate monitors—in moderate use in other school districts such as Ocean View in Huntington Beach—are used once a week by each student during workouts. The results are transferred into a health and fitness computer program and made available to students and their parents. The school doesn't have any increased liability for the heart-rate monitors because they are not being used for diagnostic purposes (Vardon online).

But Greg Howit, a 29-year veteran of teaching physical education, has notified parents when he saw "heart-rate irregularities in their children. One couple sent him a thank-you note, saying they would take their daughter to a cardiologist" (Vardon online). **Commentary** → **The New P.E. system is a way to learn about all the different methods one can use to stay healthy. A person will also find out how to get the best exercise he or she can, without all the name-calling and abuse that the competitive sports often offer.**