AXES Method of Paragraph Development

Assertion

- ✔ The topic sentence, or assertion, creates a specific and arguable point you will make in the paragraph.
- ✔ The topic sentence must connect the paragraph to your thesis or general claim.
- ✔ Usually assertions should go at the beginning of the paragraph. Usually this is done in the first sentence, but it can also go in the second if the first sentence is transitional.
- ✔ Any assertions must be arguable.

eXample

- ✔ Examples are evidence that supports your assertion.
- ✔ This evidence can be anything from quotes to images to tables of data.
- ✔ You should always introduce and cite your examples.

Explanation

- ✔ An example never speaks for itself. As a writer you must provide explanations on how and why you evidence supports your claim.
- ✔ For example, when working with a quote, some words may need to be contextualized or emphasized through explanation to connect them to your claim.
- ✔ You should never just leave data in the middle of a paragraph. You need to explain how you data connects to your assertion through analysis.

Significance

- ✔ You need to inform the reader of why they should care about what you wrote by showing the significance.
- ✔ You want to anticipate the claim of "So what?" that can be posed by the reader.
- ✔ Significance is what makes a paper or paragraph interesting to a reader. Papers without purpose are boring to read.

AXES in Action

This is an example of a finished AXES paragraph. The indicated elements are noted with (A), (X), (E), and (S) indicators.

Dogs are not only popular companions for the average human, but have also been shaped into different forms by humankind. (A) For example, early dogs were likely domesticated wolves that we "actively bred… to become dogs just the way they now breed dogs to be tiny or large, or to herd sheep" (Gorman). (X) The prevailing theory is that ancient man would have begun to slowly domesticate wolves by providing them food. (E) Eventually they would form a relationship of cooperation that over time would lead to a population of wolf-descendants that were raised by humans entirely. (S)

(A) works to introduce the claim that humans have shaped the evolution of the dog

(X) is an example in that is uses a quote to point out specific evidence about the claim..

(E) presents further explanation to contextualize the quote to the claim.

(S) explains the significance of the topic being discussed.

Work Cited

Gorman, J. "The Big Search to Find Out Where Dogs Come From." *The New York Times*, The New York Times Company, 18 Jan. 2016, nytimes.com/2016/01/19/science/the-big-search-to-find-out-where-dogs-come-from.html.