

## Claim/Data/Warrant Paragraph

The CDW paragraph is a way of writing analytical paragraphs in which the writer's opinion is supported by textual evidence and a detailed analysis of the textual evidence. The purpose of the CDW form is to assure that the central statement of a paragraph (the CLAIM) is *always* strongly supported (by DATA and its WARRANT). Any suggestion by the use of the acronym that there is only 1 data and 1 warrant per paragraph is accidental. Most if not all CDW paragraphs have 2-3 data and a warrant that accompanies each one.

- **CLAIM:** This is a statement of your topic (what your paragraph is about) AND your specific opinion or observation about it. It is one sentence (usually) and includes the author and title of the literary work you intend to cite in your DATA (punctuated correctly). It is as detailed and specific as you can make it!

*Example:* In Edgar Allen Poe's "Cask of Amontillado," the ending is foreshadowed both by Montresor's malice and the obviously elaborate scheme that unfolds in the plot.

- **DATA:** This is a quote, statistic, or other evidence taken from a source that supports your CLAIM. It is **introduced** by a sentence or partial sentence that indicates how it may relate to your claim or earlier statements. This introduction is called a transition statement or tag. It will end in a comma if it contains a reporting verb (he retorts, she states, the author writes, Romeo whines, etc.) or a colon if the quote introduction is a complete idea (that is to say, if you feel like using a period, but the sentence really does set up a quote, you probably want to use a ':'). Your DATA is cited using parenthetical referencing, which is a form of MLA documentation.

*Example:* To illustrate, Montresor reveals the malice he feels towards Fortunato when he says, "The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as best I could, but when he ventured upon insult I vowed revenge" (5).

Note that in the example, only the page number goes in the parenthesis, and the period goes AFTER the parentheses, not after the last word of the quote. This is because the title of the piece and author were mentioned in the first sentence.

- **WARRANT:** A warrant is the analysis of the textual evidence used to support your claim. It includes a statement of what the quote says if necessary AND what it means (this latter part can never be skipped or assumed!). Moreover, you **MUST** indicate how this meaning supports, that is to say **proves** the claim. You cannot merely state 'this quote shows that \_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_.' You must, rather, suggest that the passage illustrates your point for some reason that YOU supply. The use of a 'because' or similar analytical word will force you not to skip this step. A warrant is the real analysis of an analytical paragraph; therefore, it should be 2-3 sentences (AT THE LEAST) and should leave the reader sure of the writer's point. Note the extensive ANALYSIS of the previous quote in the following example.

*Example:* Although we have no idea from the plot what injuries Montresor has experienced, we can tell by this passage that some insult has been exchanged and that Montresor means to repay Fortunato for it as well as "the thousand injuries" he has suffered. The foreboding sound of "vowed revenge" clearly suggests a deep malice. However, the use of the past tense in this opening also allows the malice to foreshadow the ending, since the use of the past tense would suggest that the ending has occurred in actual time *before* the narrator begins to tell his story.

- And how many data/warrant sets are expected in a well formed analytical paragraph? TWO-THREE! No one believes ANYTHING when given a single example! Perhaps you could come up with a good data that represents a clear example of the complex plot Montresor has dreamed up to take his revenge on Fortunato. Then you must explain how the passage shows evidence of a complex scheme, and then why this particular complex scheme suggests that the end is a foregone conclusion.
- **Conclusions:** Very often you will want to sum up the content of your two warrants, knitting your whole point together once more.

*Example:* Taken together, Montresor's opening expression of malicious intent phrased in the past tense and the obviously premeditated scheme that unfolds during the plot foreshadow Fortunato's terrible death at the end of "Cask of Amontillado."