

ACADEMIC SKILLS

Week 10

Project Execution II: Organization

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Agenda

Structure

Sectioning Our Work

A Special Type of Paragraph

Targeted Learning Outcome

Argument-driven paragraphs & evidence-based sections

Do you prefer reading essays broken into sections or those that comprise one unbroken block of writing?

Do you organize your essays into smaller blocks?

Is there an ideal number of sections an essay should include?

Have you decided how to break your research papers into sections?

What Are Sections?

Sections are self-enclosed blocks of related paragraphs in which we attempt to build part of our case to persuade readers of our position

Your essays should ideally contain circa 3 sections, each containing 3-5 paragraphs, each providing evidence in support of the thesis statement

This approach can help us as writers, as it requires we organize our ideas into coherent groups, which helps us to think about argumentation

Organizing work into sections can also help readers, because it clearly spotlights to them a key piece of evidence in a larger piece of work

Sections also enable readers to take a break, thus allowing them to reflect back on the previous topic before moving on to new material

A Loose Template for Sections

A prototype section might be comprised of these components:

Title

This should give a clear sense of what the section is about

Section statement: tell the reader what the section is about and why it is important to the overall argument you are making

Paragraphs (about 3)

- These paragraphs each add an example as evidence of the assertion
- Organize them in some logical way or in terms of their importance

Final Sentence – The Outro (DESIRABLE)

Gestures to the content of the next section

A Section **(Section 3 of a Five-Section Paper)**

Title: “Facet II: Progressive Hollywood”

Section Statement

A second facet of the Karlovy Vary brand framed Hollywood as a progressive institution by way of pictures that advanced broad leftist critiques of American life.

Point 1/Paragraph 1: Reasons for this brand facet

Point 2/Paragraph 2: Films about American institutions in decline

Point 3/Paragraph 3: Films about racism in the US

Point 4/Paragraph 4: Inclusion of progressive films that were not hits

Outro: “The prestige of such films, and the talent behind them, gestured to a third, intersecting, facet of Hollywood’s Karlovy Vary brand.”

Do you work to a system when writing paragraphs?

Argument-Driven Paragraphs

We can organize our paragraphs in a similar way to sections, i.e. ones that sign-posit content and deliver a manageable amount of evidence

I propose a formula for organizing paragraphs: it involves building a four-five point paragraph supporting a single aspect of argumentation

The Stinger: The first sentence makes an assertion that represents the main point you would like to make in the paragraph as a whole

Evidencers: Then include about three or four points that you feel are likely to persuade the reader of your stinger: 1-2 sentences per point

Outro: avoid links between paragraphs – this just leads to repetition between a sentence's outro and the stinger opening the next paragraph

An Argument-Driven Paragraph

(Stinger) The submission of many of Hollywood's leftist films grew out of their positive reception at Eastern European festivals. **(1)** Such practice can be traced back to 1956 when Karlovy Vary warmly welcomed *Marty*, the story of a Bronx butcher struggling to find love due to his low social status, while fearing for his livelihood when a supermarket announces it will open in the neighbourhood. **(2)** Then, a mass walkout during a Moscow screening of the Presidential biopic *Sunrise at Campobello* (1960) in 1961 suggested that it was unwise to submit patriotic fare. **(3)** By mid-decade it was clear that leftist films represented a more prudent choice, with *The Defiant Ones*, a prison-escape drama critical of US race relations, applauded in the Soviet capital in 1963, and *The Best Man*, a tale of a corrupt Presidential race, winning a Special Jury Prize at Karlovy Vary the following year. **(4)** Confidence in submitting leftist tracts remained high thanks to their continued positive reception at the region's festivals, their purchase by monopolies, and isolated events like the public support local media elites gave to actress Jane Fonda when she denounced the Vietnam War.

Reorganize the following sentences into a coherent paragraph:

1. Such films built on the positive reception of similar submissions at Moscow, including the aforementioned *The Defiant Ones*, and *Lilies of the Field* (1963) – a story of a black handyman building a chapel for a superfluity of European nuns.
2. In addition to playing a key role in Party rhetoric, this topic had both furnished regional cultural products and motivated US public diplomacy, details Siefert.
3. Perhaps the most strategically important of these leftist pictures were, however, those that echoed Eastern Bloc criticisms of what Marsha Siefert has called “America’s most critical weakness”: its subjugation of countless citizens based on their skin colour.
4. Where *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner* pictured family concerns over an interracial engagement, *In the Heat of the Night* explored racial tensions in the South. Others included *Lady Sings the Blues*, about segregation and drug abuse; *Buck and the Preacher*, about black cowboys protecting freedmen; and *Conrack*, about inadequate schooling for rural blacks.
5. In response, the MPAA and its members sent several dramas addressing black concerns about the social, emotional, and financial repercussions of a small black middle-class emerging stateside: many starred Sidney Poitier.
6. While many Hollywood submissions of this sort could be – and indeed were – accused of trading in redeeming images of benevolent whites rather than truly addressing structural inequalities, they still rendered visible some of America’s worst race problems.
7. Others included *Lady Sings the Blues*, about segregation and drug abuse; *Buck and the Preacher*, about black cowboys protecting freedmen; and *Conrack*, about inadequate schooling for rural blacks.

Actual Version

3) Perhaps the most strategically important of these leftist pictures were, however, those that echoed Eastern Bloc criticisms of what Marsha Siefert has called “America’s most critical weakness”: its subjugation of countless citizens based on their skin colour.

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Takeaways

If we are to maximize the quality of our work and grades, we need to present our argument and evidence in a reader-friendly fashion

Because such an approach is designed to help readers, it also stands to help us to organize our ideas and evidence in a coherent manner

When it comes to organizing our work into sections, about 3 equal length sections (plus intro and conclusion) are an ideal target to aim for

These ideally involve a brief statement about the section's content, plus about 3 paragraphs, each unpacking a single major piece of evidence

Paragraphs work similarly, the first sentence should encapsulate the whole paragraph, and then include 3-5 evidence sentences supporting it

Next Time

Date: 01.12.22

Instructor: Sarka

Topic: Work-in-Progress Seminar 2

Outcome: Responding to earlier feedback, and signposting arguments and organization.

Preparation: Prepare a **brief** overview, to be delivered in class, of the current state of your research project (see syllabus)