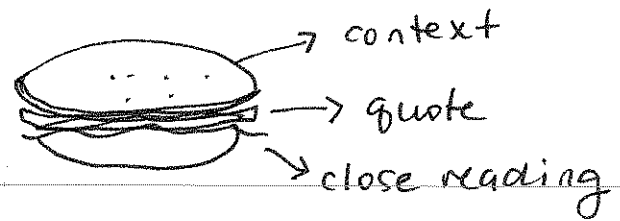


## Supporting Paragraphs

- ORGANIZATION: Make sure that there is some logic to the order of your supporting paragraphs
- TOPIC SENTENCES: Each paragraph should begin with a sentence or two that introduces the part of your argument that you will prove in that paragraph.
- EVIDENCE: Aim to include 2-3 direct quotes as evidence in each paragraph.
- CLOSE READING: Never provide evidence for plot or description; instead, aim to choose quotes that require some interpretation in order to connect them to your argument. Quotes that require close reading to explain them (i.e. ones that contain irony, imagery, metaphors, etc.) are the richest kind of quotes—aim to include at least a couple in your essay.
- THE QUOTE HAMBURGER: Always provide context before the quote and close read the quote to explain its significance afterwards



- STAY FOCUSED: Each of your supporting paragraphs should remain focused on the topic sentence. It can also be helpful to “return to your argument and/or your because clause” at some point in each paragraph, whether this is in your topic sentence or in the final sentence of the paragraph.
- TRANSITIONS: You can either write a transition sentence at the end of each supporting paragraph or you can use a transitional word at the beginning of your topic sentences. Transitional words—also known as conjunctive adverbs—are a really helpful way to help “build” your argument. Here are a bunch of them:

accordingly	furthermore	moreover	similarly
also	hence	namely	still
anyway	however	nevertheless	then
besides	incidentally	next	thereafter
certainly	indeed	nonetheless	therefore
consequently	instead	now	thus
finally	likewise	otherwise	undoubtedly
further	meanwhile		

## Organizing Evidence into Supporting Paragraphs

1. **Make** a list of all of the evidence you can find in the story to prove your argument (quotes, characters, significant events and passages).
2. **Divide** up that evidence into topics for your individual supporting paragraphs. Aim for a specific number of supporting paragraphs; four is a good number.
3. **Organize** those topics so that they come in a deliberate order; chronological is often a good way to go, and it is always a good idea to provide some analysis of the very beginning of the text and the very end of the text (final lines or paragraph)
4. **Write** your topic sentences: For each of your topics, compose a clear and specific argument about how it connects to your larger thesis. Try to keep this assertion to one, maybe two, sentences.

Topic sentences should

- be phrased in local terms
- always avoid summary or narration (you want to avoid “telling the story”)
- aim to be interesting and a little risky
- always serve to build your argument—they should not come in a random order.

### Poor Topic Sentences:

1. George and Lennie travel around together from ranch to ranch looking for work. (summary)
2. Sometimes a decision made too quickly can have bad results. (too vague—always phrase in local terms)
4. A blind man comes to visit the narrator and his wife. (summary)

### Average Topic Sentences:

1. George is frustrated by Lennie (vague and too close to summary)
2. People in *Of Mice and Men* are unhappy (too vague—needs some significance or some reasoning)
3. The story begins with the narrator dreading a visit from a blind friend of his wife’s. (pretty much true)

### Great Topic Sentences:

1. When the book opens, it is clear that George needs some help; although he and Lennie are close, red flags abound.
2. The unhappiness of the men in *Of Mice and Men* is a direct result of their lack of intimacy with other human beings.
3. The narrator’s incredibly narrow mind is clear from the very beginning of the story when he dreads a visit from his wife’s friend who is blind.