

11. USING DETAILS TO PERSUADE: STATISTICS, DIALOGUE, AND QUOTATIONS

Appeal to logos with statistics. There are many ways to appeal to your reader's logic and reason, including stating a clear point, backing it up with cogent evidence, and organizing it coherently. One specific way to establish your logos is by using statistics. Objective details like numbers show the reader the validity of your point in concrete terms. Don't overwhelm your reader with statistics, however. Instead, select the ones you think are the strongest and most memorable. Also, consider your reader, and state the statistic so that it provides the best, clearest picture possible. For example, instead of saying "25.3 percent of teenagers say they like broccoli," round off the number and say, "1 in 4" or "one-fourth."

Appeal to pathos with dialogue. Your readers have brains, but they also have hearts, so don't forget the kinds of details that appeal to your reader's imagination and emotions, such as imagery, figurative language, and specific word choice. One specific way to establish your pathos is by using dialogue. Your readers have a natural affinity for the sound of other human voices; after all we have been listening to each other talk a lot longer than we have been reading words on paper. Like adding an anecdote, dialogue creates human interest, so sprinkle a bit of authentic-sounding dialogue in your essay. It will give your facts a little bit of the punch that comes from fiction and real life.

Appeal to ethos with quotations. Like lawyers arguing before a jury, good writers know that they must establish credibility and maintain the trust of readers. They do this in many ways, such as making clear points, presenting details, showing evidence, and writing in a sincere, confident voice. Adding a quotation helps you borrow the prestige and authority of experts, using their words to support your case. Integrate them smoothly into your own writing by framing them. For example, James C. Humes, a speechwriter for two American presidents, said, "A quotation in the middle of a talk is like a baseball pitcher's change of pace. A quotation arrests the audience's attention. It wakes them up. It energizes them." Notice the lead-in phrase provides the name and the qualifications of the speaker and integrates the quote. Using a quotation in this way allows the reader to judge its credibility.

Directions

The following three passages come from an essay in which the writer argues that spelling is overrated. Identify which of the three appeals the writer uses in each passage.

1. *Napoleon Bonaparte, the great French emperor and military leader, did not rank spelling very high on his list of priorities, saying, "A man occupied with public or other important business cannot, and need not, attend to spelling."*
2. *People waste too much time worrying about spelling. For example, as I'm writing this essay, instead of thinking carefully about my ideas, I'm wasting time thinking about things like, "How do you spell 'carefully' again? Is it with or without an 'e'?"*
3. *Even The New York Times has trouble with spelling. Since the year 2000, America's newspaper of record has misspelled the word "misspelled" fourteen times.*

12. ORGANIZING WITH EXAMPLES

To understand the full effect of examples in writing, you need to know the difference between deductive reasoning and inductive reasoning.

Deductive reasoning: moving from the general to the specific. Aspiring writers can learn a lot by studying how other writers balance the general and the specific. The following quote is deductive, that is, it begins with a general idea followed by specific, detailed examples. In other words, it first tells the reader, then shows the reader with examples and details. For example:

It is possible to own too much. A man with one watch knows what time it is; a man with two watches is never quite sure. —Lee Segall

Segall begins with a general statement of opinion about owning too much. He then follows with a specific showing example explaining the generalization in concrete terms.

Inductive reasoning: moving from the specific to the general. Sometimes writers use inductive organization by beginning with specific details and examples that lead to a logical claim. Notice how the following quote by Kathy Seligman follows the inductive pattern by giving two specific examples—one from baseball and one from fishing—that lead to a logical general claim about achieving your goals.

You can't hit a home run unless you step up to the plate. You can't catch fish unless you put your line in the water. You can't reach your goals if you don't try.

Directions

Analyze the following quotations and label them as deductive or inductive.

1. *Yes, there is Nirvana; it is in leading your sheep to a green pasture, and in putting your child to sleep, and in writing the last line of your poem.* —Kahlil Gibran
2. *Positive thinking is the key to success in business, education, pro football, anything that you can mention ... I go out there thinking that I'm going to complete every pass.* —Ron Jaworski
3. *To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better ... to know even one life has breathed easier because you lived. This is to be successful.* —Ralph W. Emerson
4. *In preparing a speech, remember to make brief notes; Abraham Lincoln wrote the "Gettysburg Address" on the back of an envelope.* —Unknown
5. *No horse gets anywhere until he is harnessed. No steam or gas ever drives anything until it is confined. No Niagara is ever turned into light and power until it is tunneled. No life ever grows great until it is focused, dedicated, disciplined.* —Harry Emerson Fosdick

13. ANECDOTES: THE SECRET IS OUT!

The word *anecdote* comes originally from Greek, meaning “things not given out.” Today, however, good writers know that using anecdotes—brief stories that illustrate a point—is one of the best ways to support a point.

Specific stories about specific people are a powerful way to illustrate general truths and to keep the reader's attention. Brain research, for example, reveals that when given a variety of different types of material to read, people will always rate stories the highest for keeping their interest. Cognitive scientist Daniel T. Willingham reports that our brains seem predisposed to understanding and remembering stories, that stories “are treated differently in memory than other types of material.”

Like examples, anecdotes show the reader your point. The key, therefore, is not just telling a story; rather, the stories you select must be relevant to your point. The stories you draw from don't have to be just about famous people. You can use stories of your personal experience, stories that you have heard from other ordinary people, or even stories you have discovered in fictional stories.

Directions

Read the following three anecdotes, and match each anecdote with the appropriate general statement that follows.

1. *At the Battle of Thermopylae in 480 B.C. the Greek forces faced an invading Persian army. Greatly outnumbered by the Persian forces, one of the Greek soldiers reported to the Spartan warrior Dieneces that the invading force had so many archers that their arrows would blot out the sun. Undaunted even by the overwhelming odds against him, Dieneces replied, “So much the better, we shall fight in the shade.”*
 2. *One day a friend of Socrates observed the great philosopher carefully studying some flashy items on display in the marketplace. Knowing Socrates' reputation for frugality, the friend asked, “Why, Socrates, do you come to the market, since you never buy anything?” Socrates responded, “I'm always amazed to see that there are so many things I can do without.”*
 3. *Two women came before King Solomon claiming to be the mother of a single baby boy. After briefly contemplating how to resolve the dispute, the king ordered his officers to bring him a sword. He then announced to the women that he would cut the child in two and give each woman a half. One of the women immediately cried out, saying, “Give her the living child rather than kill it!” while the other woman demanded, “Let it be neither mine or thine, but divide it.” Solomon, recognizing that the compassion of the first woman identified her as the true mother, ordered that the baby be given to her.*
- A. Knowledge of human psychology can come in handy when trying to solve complex problems. Anecdote # _____
- B. Vain pursuit of material possessions brings little satisfaction. Anecdote # _____
- C. Humor in the face of a stressful situation can dispel fear. Anecdote # _____

14. INDUCTIVE HOOK AND FULL-CIRCLE CONCLUSION

Examples are incredibly useful for helping you prove your point in the body of your essay. Examples and anecdotes also are excellent for hooking your reader's interest from the very beginning of your essay. Similarly, returning to an opening example or anecdote at the end of your composition will bring your reader full circle to a pleasing conclusion.

An inductive hook. Make a strong first impression on your reader by beginning with a specific example or anecdote that relates directly to your main point. Starting with a specific example or an anecdote will hook the reader's interest by providing concrete images of real people, places, and things. After your opening example or anecdote, you can then lead your reader from the specific to the general by stating your thesis. Using an inductive hook also opens the door for ending your composition with a smooth, satisfying conclusion.

A full-circle conclusion. When you are wrapping up your essay, return to your opening example or anecdote to give your reader the pleasing sense of coming full circle. Returning to the starting point will give the reader the satisfying, almost subliminal, feeling of completing a journey successfully.

Directions

Read the following passage on train travel. As you read, notice how the writer employs both an inductive hook and a full-circle conclusion.

Sitting in a train traveling from Manchester to London in 1990, a young woman got a billion-dollar idea. She began to imagine a character—"a bespectacled boy who did not know he was a wizard." Where else but in the friendly and comfortable confines of a train might someone like J.K. Rowling be inspired to write stories of the young wizard named Harry Potter?

Beyond just literary inspiration, there are plenty of other reasons to be inspired by train travel. It's economical—typically half the cost of traveling by plane. It's flexible and hassle-free—no need to stand in long security lines or even make advanced reservations. And it's convenient—unlike airports, most train stations are located in the heart of the city, in easy walking distance from hotels, sightseeing, and shopping. Not only is train travel cheaper than airfare, it is also more consistently and reliably priced without the arbitrary constraints of airline pricing where, for example, a one-way ticket costs more than a round-trip ticket. In addition to economical sense, train travel also makes eco-sense since trains are more energy efficient, using 70 percent less energy and emitting up to 85 percent less air pollution than airplanes. But perhaps the best argument for train travel is the charm and relaxation of this most humane form of transportation. There's plenty of legroom, plenty of opportunities to move or walk around, and plenty of things to see right outside your window: wild life, rivers, mountains, small towns, and great cities. You'll have time to breath, relax, and imagine.

J.K. Rowling may have imagined a young wizard flying on a broomstick, but she didn't get the idea in the cramped, claustrophobic seat of a flying jet airliner. Harry Potter was born on a train.

1. What example or anecdote does the writer use to open the paragraph?
2. How does the concluding sentence bring the reader full circle?
3. As a reader, how would you describe the effect of the writer's use of an inductive hook and a full-circle conclusion?
4. Now select your own topic from the list of prompts your teacher gives you. Write an introductory paragraph using an inductive hook.