

The Two-Chunk Paragraph Method

For single-paragraph responses

Concept: the two-chunk paragraph is a method that will help you develop strong evidence-based writing for literary analysis. This method provides a structure for you to cite strong evidence and to explain how you have interpreted the evidence to support your claim.

The basic idea is that you state your claim in your topic sentence, prove what you're saying with two "chunks" of information, and then reassert your point in a concluding sentence.

Outline

Here is the outline for a two-chunk paragraph:

- I. **Topic sentence (TS)** – This sentence tells the reader what the main idea of the paragraph is. Typically, you state the claim that you are going to prove. If you are writing a paragraph in response to a question, the topic sentence should answer the question.
- a. **Concrete Detail 1 (CD1):** Specific evidence taken directly from the text, either as a quotation or paraphrase.
- b. **Commentary 1 (COM1):** This is where you interpret the detail and explain how it supports your claim.
- c. **Transition (TR):** A phrase or sentence that shows how the two chunks are connected, such as a phrase like "Another example of this..." to transition to a supporting detail or a contrasting transition like "however..."
- d. **Concrete Detail 2 (CD2):** A second piece of evidence from the text.
- e. **Commentary 2 (COM2):** As with the first chunk, interpret the detail and explain how it supports your claim.
- f. **Concluding Sentence (CS):** "wrap up" the paragraph by reasserting the claim you made in the topic sentence.

**CHUNK
1**

**CHUNK
2**

Sample Two-Chunk Organizer

On the next page is an example of a fully-completed organizer. The information in the organizer is a response to the following question:

In "On the Sidewalk Bleeding" by Evan Hunter, how is Andy characterized?
Provide at least two details to support your response.

Two-Chunk Paragraph Organizer

For single-paragraph responses

Topic Sentence (Main Idea) – if you are responding to a question, the topic sentence should answer it!

Andy never shows any fear, but he grows sad when he realizes that he is going to die.

Chunk #1

Detail (Evidence from Text)	Context (who, when, how)	Page	Commentary (<u>explain</u> how the detail supports your claim)
Andy “forgot that blood was rushing from his body” and thinks about how he and Laura “would have a lot of kids, and then they would get out of the neighborhood”	Andy thinks this soon after he has been stabbed	13	This shows that Andy is not afraid of dying because he is dreaming of the future instead of worrying about what will happen to him.

Chunk #2

Detail (Evidence from Text)	Context (who, when, how)	Page	Commentary (<u>explain</u> how the detail supports your claim)
Andy is “not frightened” but “only filled with an overwhelming sadness that his life would be over at sixteen”	Andy thinks this after he realizes that no one is going to help him	17-18	Andy still is not afraid, but he knows that his dreams of marrying Laura will not come true.

Concluding Sentence (reassert the main idea):

Andy shows courage all the way to the end, but he becomes sad when he realizes that his life has been wasted.

Sample Two-Chunk Paragraph

The following sample paragraph, which is based on the information in the sample organizer on the previous page, is a response to the following question:

In “On the Sidewalk Bleeding” by Evan Hunter, how is Andy characterized?
Provide at least two details to support your response.

In “On the Sidewalk Bleeding” by Evan Hunter, Andy is characterized as a fearless young man who becomes increasingly sad as he realizes that he is going to die. At first, Andy is thinking of Laura and their future together. The narrator writes that he “forgot that blood was rushing from his body” and that he thought about how “they would have a lot of kids, and then they would get out of the neighborhood” (13). This shows that Andy is not worried about dying. However, later in the story Andy’s attitude changes when he realizes that he is about to lose his life. The narrator states that Andy was “not frightened” but “only filled with an overwhelming sadness that his life would be over at sixteen” (17-18). He still isn’t afraid of death, but he has realized that he will not achieve his dreams for the future. Andy’s courage remains at the end of the story, but the grim reality of his death turns his optimism into grief over a life that he realizes has been wasted.

Comment [VCSD1]: The topic sentence clearly and directly answers the question.

Comment [VCSD2]: This is the first chunk. The writer first provides context (“At first...”) and then gives two quotes and a commentary sentence that provides the interpretation that the quotes show that Andy is not afraid.

Comment [VCSD3]: This sentence is the transition between the two chunks.

Comment [VCSD4]: This is the second chunk. Again, this writer has chosen two closely-related quotes from the same part of the text and then follows them with a sentence of commentary.

Comment [VCSD5]: This is the concluding sentence: it reasserts the point made in the introduction.

How to Use Quotes: Make a Sandwich!

When you use a direct quotation, put it in a sandwich. Here’s what you do:

1. Start with a **signal phrase** that provides context and tells the reader who you are quoting (a character, the narrator, etc.).
2. Then, insert the quotation.
3. After the quotation, put the **citation** that shows where you got it. In most cases, this is the page number.

That’s it! Your quote is sandwiched between the **signal phrase** and the **citation**.

Examples:

Andy was “only filled with an overwhelming sadness that his life would be over at sixteen” (17-18).

While spending Christmas at Finch’s Landing, Francis tells Scout, “Atticus is ruinin’ the family” (87).