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Argumentation at the paragraph level

The paragraph of a scientific text forms a unit because it features **one central idea** that contributes to the overall aim of the text. This understanding of paragraphs as individual arguments can be useful both when analyzing other people's texts, and when writing your own. The blocks below show a schematic representation of how an idea or an argument can be laid out in a paragraph. The first and last blocks provide the fixed framework, but otherwise the order of the steps is flexible as long as signal words clarify the structure of the argument.

Claim	What is this paragraph about? What is being argued?
Justification	Why is the argument valid?
Evidence	What - independent data - extraneous thoughts - examples support this?
Objection & Response	What speaks against it? What results from the objections?
Perspective	What consequences can you draw from showing that your claim is true?

Example:

Free meals are an integral part of a fair university because fee-based canteens inevitably lead to the systematic exclusion of certain students. Even with seemingly low prices, there are some students who are discouraged from visiting canteens. For example, in a recent university-wide survey[1], 15% of the questioned students referred to the high costs as a reason for not going to the canteen. Of these, 5% said that even lower prices were still unacceptable to them. Thus, a significant proportion of students are discouraged from participating in university life. As studies[2] have shown, this can lead to lower achievement and a higher dropout rate. Thus, canteen costs are a cause of unequal opportunities for success.
(*This example is entirely fictional and not based on real research.*)

➔ **Claim**
➔ **Justification**
➔ **Evidence**
➔ **Objection & Response**
➔ **Perspective**

Literature:
Booth, Wayne C., Colomb, Gregory G., and Williams, Joseph M.: Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing: The Craft of Research, 3rd Edition. Chicago 2009.