

# Elevate your writing!

## The CER paragraph format

Have you ever asked a teacher how long an answer or a paragraph should be?

Most of you have.

But get this...Length doesn't matter; it is the quality of what you write that matters!!!

The best way to make sure your writing has everything it needs to have is to follow the CER method of writing:



What is your CLAIM? This is a point you want to make about the topic.



Back up your claim with EVIDENCE. What proof do you have for your claim? This can be statistics, quotes from texts, personal observations, etc.



What is your REASONING for your claim and how does your evidence support your reasoning?

### Tips:

- **Evidence** includes examples, statistics, facts, anecdotes, personal experiences, etc.
- Never leave a quote dangling. Include **transitional expressions** such as
  - For example, “...” or The speaker states “...” etc.
  - Include parenthetical citations when necessary: (Smith 32).
- Remember, the reasoning is your opinion: this is where you get to explain everything.
- If you use more than one piece of evidence for your answer, you need to have a reasoning for each one.
  - Depending on how in-depth your answer is, a paragraph could be very detailed.

### General Rubric:

4 - Excellent	3 - Good	2 - Almost	1 - Not Quite
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Completely responds to prompt</li><li>• Deep understanding of key ideas</li><li>• Excellent evidence and connections</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• May stray from the prompt slightly</li><li>• General understanding of key ideas</li><li>• Good evidence and connections</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Somewhat focused on the prompt</li><li>• Some gaps in understanding key ideas</li><li>• Decent evidence, attempt at connection.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No attempt to respond to prompt or substitutes a different task</li><li>• Little to no understanding of key ideas</li><li>• No evidence, no connection</li></ul>

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Common question starter in my class:

## To what extent...?

This eliminates a polar answer (a yes/no answer) that doesn't allow for discussion.

By asking "To what extent...", you aren't discussing *if* you believe something or not, you are discussing *how much* you believe it.

### FOR INSTANCE:

Is blue your favorite color?

This is just a "yes" or "no" answer.

Even adding "Explain" to the question doesn't really do anything for a discussion of the color.

### HOWEVER:

To what extent is blue your favorite color?

This prompts more discussion: maybe you like the color blue, but it's not a favorite.

Or maybe you don't like the color blue, but you know there is nothing wrong with it.

Or maybe you don't like the color blue at all because it makes you depressed or reminds you of something you don't like.

Any way you answer, you will almost automatically 1) do the CER paragraph and 2) think more about why you think one way or another.

**Asking questions with "To what extent..." allows for more discussion of ideas, which is what you need to focus on in your analysis of...everything.**

Therefore, I ask questions with this starter. Get used to it. 😊