English: purpose, focus and argumentative support

Original skill preparation; versioned source scope

ACT English: Purpose, Focus and Argumentative Support

- Name a paragraph's purpose and test the **relevance 相关性** of each sentence and **detail 细节**.
- Judge whether **evidence 证据** supports the claim it is attached to.
- Decide whether a **counterargument 反论点** helps the writer's **argument 论证**.
- Choose a qualified conclusion that the passage's facts allow.

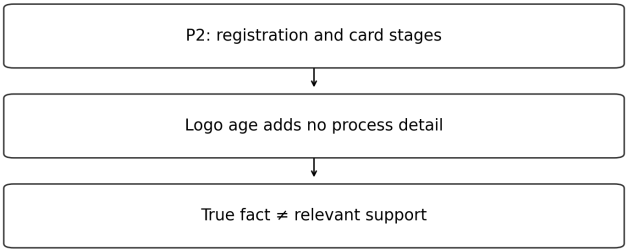
Purpose first

- Before an add, delete or replace question, sum up the paragraph's purpose in a few words.
- Ask: what would the reader lose if this sentence were removed?
- The answer choices often give reasons. The right one names the paragraph's actual purpose.

Evidence and support

- Support must match the claim: a count of complaints supports "noise was a problem"; a description of the room does not.
- The strongest support is specific: numbers, examples, named actions.
- A new detail proposed by the writer should be clearly linked to the paragraph's topic.

Figure: Evidence and support



- Worked steps: P2: registration and card stages $\rightarrow$ Logo age adds no process detail $\rightarrow$ True fact $\neq$ relevant support
- Match each part of the diagram to the text.

Objections and limits

- A **counterargument** or limit can strengthen writing: it shows the writer has thought about problems.
- Keep an objection if the passage responds to it, or if it explains a later decision.
- A conclusion should match the evidence: if other things changed at the same time, the cause is uncertain.

Practice passage

- Original continuous editing passage — A place to mend

P1 On the first Saturday of each month, a group of volunteers opens a repair table in the public library. [S1] The project began when librarian Noor noticed a row of broken desk lamps outside a nearby building. [S2] Some needed specialist work, but others had loose switches or damaged cables. [S3] Noor did not want untrained visitors to try unsafe electrical repairs. [S4] She invited a qualified repairer to explain which items the group could inspect and which should go to a professional.

- The first session accepted only battery-powered objects, with damaged batteries excluded.
- Visitors registered their items and described the faults before any work began.

Worked example: deleting and replacing

- P2's purpose: how visitors register and how the cards show each item's stage.
- The logo adds nothing to that purpose, so delete it.
- A relevant replacement might explain how a volunteer changes a card when an inspection finishes. Since the passage does not state this, it should be offered as a suggestion, not a fact.

Worked example: support, objection and conclusion

- Evidence that noise was a problem: "a visitor log recorded six complaints" in the first two sessions.
- "The room could hold fewer people" is an objection to moving. Keep it: it explains why the group also introduced arrival windows and kept walk-in spaces.
- A qualified conclusion: "Recorded complaints fell from six to one in the next two sessions, but attendance also fell, so the move's separate effect is uncertain."
- "The move eliminated noise" fails: one complaint remained, and other conditions changed.

Common errors

- Keeping a sentence because it is true or interesting.
- Choosing support that matches the topic but not the claim.
- Deleting an objection that the passage later answers.

Common errors (2)

- Writing a conclusion stronger than the evidence.
- Presenting a suggested detail as a fact from the passage.

Key terms

- **relevance**: How directly a sentence serves its paragraph's purpose.
- **detail**: A specific fact or example.
- **evidence**: Information that supports a claim.
- **counterargument**: A point against the writer's position.

Check yourself

- A paragraph argues that a school garden teaches science. Which supports it better: "Students measured plant growth each week" or "The garden is next to the gym"?
- Why might a writer include "Some parents worried about the cost"?
- Complaints fell after a change, but fewer people came. Is "The change ended complaints" justified?