

ANALYZING INVESTIGATION WRITING – ORGANIZATION

Preparation

- Scissors (This activity asks students to cut up paper, so make sure you have plenty of scissors handy in the classroom)

Purpose

In this quick opening activity, your students will focus on the Organization row of the BHP Writing Rubric so that they understand how the presentation and ordering of ideas in an essay can enhance the argument being made. Students will rearrange the paragraphs of a student essay so they can see how different arrangements impact the analysis, clarity, cohesion, and overall logic of an argument, which will help them understand that a well-executed argument is one that has a clear introduction, progresses logically, and concludes effectively. As part of this activity, students will think about how the claim tester logic is a natural part of a well-crafted argument.

Practices

Reading, claim testing

Students have to read the paragraphs of this essay before they are able to determine its proper organization. Since it's still early in the course, be sure to support students as they dive into this somewhat difficult reading and encourage the use of Three Close Reads as needed. In this quick activity, you'll discuss the role of logic, one of our claim testers, in arranging or writing an effective essay and structuring an argument well. Be sure to dig into that with your students, but also try to push their thinking to consider the importance of logic more generally when evaluating arguments, not just as part of an essay's organization.

Process

Tell students that in this activity, they are going to take a few minutes to focus on Organization, another row of the BHP Writing Rubric. However, instead of starting by discussing the importance of a particular element of writing like you usually do with these activities, for this one you're going to go with a "less talk, more action" approach.

If students don't already have their own copies of the Analyzing Investigation Writing – Organization Worksheet, hand them out. Tell students to cut up the sample essay into pieces according to the guidance on the worksheet. Let them know that this essay was written by an actual high school student in response to the Investigation 1 prompt, "Why do we look at things from far away and close up?"

Ask the class to find two ways to organize the paragraphs of the essay so that both arrangements convey the same argument and make sense. As part of doing this, they will probably notice that one arrangement is better than the other. Tell them to place a star next to the arrangement they feel is stronger than the other.

Now, orient them to the Organization row of the BHP Writing Rubric and review the criteria for Organization with your students. Then, ask them to use what they now know about essay organization to write a few sentences about why their starred arrangement is superior. Discuss their arrangements and ideas as a class.

Make sure to discuss logic with your students, and point out that the best arrangement of an essay is also probably its most logical arrangement. What does *logical* mean, exactly? It means rational, objective, sound, cogent – the list goes on and on!

Ask students where else they've heard about logic. They'll probably answer: The claim testers! In addition to using logic in their writing, how else can they use it? If they don't mention that logic is one of the claim testers, remind them they should think about logic when they make claims or try to argue for something in particular. The more logical the argument, the easier it is to understand and believe.

ANALYZING INVESTIGATION WRITING – ORGANIZATION

Directions:

1. Cut up the attached essay along the dotted lines.
2. Find two ways of arranging the paragraphs into an order that makes the most sense for an essay. Write the first word of each paragraph next to the numbers under Arrangements 1 and 2 to show the ordering you picked for each.
3. Place a star next to the arrangement that you feel presents the ideas in the most clear and cohesive way, making the essay and its argument most effective.

Arrangement 1



1. If
2. History
3. While
4. When
5. Historians

Arrangement 2

1. Historians
 2. While
 3. When
 4. History
 5. If
4. Write two to three sentences explaining how the organization of the arrangement you starred makes it the stronger of the two essays.

Sample answer: Arrangement 1 is stronger because the major claim is presented in the opening paragraph, the ideas progress more logically, and the conclusion revisits and supports the claim that was made in the opening paragraph.



ANALYZING INVESTIGATION WRITING – ORGANIZATION

Student Essay (Teacher note: The following is the original and strongest ordering of the essay.)

If someone examines anything up-close for an extended period of time, they run the risk of losing sight of the big picture. If a person refuses to look at the details, however, things get left out. When studying any subject, it is important to adjust the scale, or perspective, to look both outward and inward. People can do this by asking bigger questions while also looking at certain details under a microscope. In history, a significant event in one country may not have any significance in another. On the other hand, sometimes a significant event in just one city may be felt around the world. History must be examined using multiple scales in order to understand not only individual events but also how those small events led to others or how they were viewed by people living not only at the time of the event but also generations after it.

History is typically plotted on linear timelines, on which one event comes after the next. If a person mapped out their day, as the timeline activity in Text 4 shows, then the events would happen from the start of that person’s day to the time they went to sleep. The scale would be extremely small and people might learn a bit about the person but probably not much because it’s just one day in the life of a person. However, if you tried switch scales and do that with the history of the Universe then there would be a lot of information in those 24 hours but all the details would be lost. When David Christian created the Big History course, he chose to examine the history of the Universe from multiple scales. His reasoning was that by looking at how humans, Earth, stars, and the Universe as a whole are connected then people would get a much better idea of how humans connect to all of these things (Text 1).

While it may be easy to ignore the finer print, it can have serious consequences. Close examination is necessary to establish more widespread patterns or trends for certain eras. History is not something that can be told from a single perspective, so it is necessary to use as many lenses as possible. Fernand Braudel explained how history should be examined using different scales: geographical time (a large scale), social time (a smaller amount of time or scale), and individual time (one of the smallest scales). His argument was that by looking at history using these three scales, one could gain a better perspective (Text 2). A historian could study something infinitely small and uncover so much information about an individual person or event, but if this information is not put in the perspective of the larger time period then this individual’s history might not make sense.

When studying the history of a monument or building, it might not be enough to look only at how it was constructed. In order to get a full history of the architecture, one might also include information on where the materials originated, why it was built in that location, what kind of support it had from the government, and how people viewed it both during the time it was built and for years after. As Dr. Lisa Randall suggests, there should be some Goldilocks Conditions (“just right” conditions) to how you view things. Her example of viewing the Eiffel Tower from a just right perspective shows how choosing the right scale or multiple scales is necessary to get the full picture (Text 5). The more small scale you inspect something, the more difficult it can be to connect events, people, or cultures. If the focus is on too large of a scale then many details will be left out and people may not understand the topic at all. However, if you include multiple scales then the story becomes one of detail while also placing that detail in the context of the place or time period.

Historians cannot look at every detail nor can they ignore the details to examine trends that happen over centuries. Both of these scales are necessary to create a story that can be understood more completely. Using multiple scales helps the historian situate a person or event within a larger time frame or see how other people or nations responded to this event. The whole of history can be seen as one chain reaction with one event causing another to happen, which then causes many more events and each one of those leads to even more effects. If people simply studied just one of these events without learning about what came before it, after it, and what caused it then the meaning of the entire event would be completely different. This is one of the main reasons why studying things from multiple scales is incredibly important.

ANALYZING INVESTIGATION WRITING – ORGANIZATION

Purpose

In this quick activity, you'll focus on the Organization row of the BHP Writing Rubric so that you can become familiar with how the presentation and ordering of ideas in an essay can enhance the argument being made. This should also help you understand that a well-executed argument is one that has a clear introduction, progresses logically, and concludes effectively. As part of this activity, you will think about how the claim tester logic is a natural part of a well-crafted argument.

Practices

Reading, claim testing

You have to read the paragraphs of this essay before you can figure out its proper organization, and the reading is not the easiest! Use the Three Close Reads process to help you better understand the essay. In this quick activity, you'll discuss the role of logic (one of our claim testers) in arranging or writing an effective essay and structuring an argument well. As part of this, consider the importance of logic in evaluating arguments in general, not just as part of an essay's organization.

Process

In this activity, you're going to take a few minutes to focus on Organization, another row of the BHP Writing Rubric. However, instead of starting by discussing how important a particular element of writing is, like you usually do with these activities, we're going to go with a "less talk, more action" approach.

Start by cutting up the sample essay included in the Analyzing Investigation Writing – Organization Worksheet into pieces according to the guidance on the worksheet. Once you have the essay cut into pieces, rearrange it in two different ways. Both arrangements must convey the same argument and make sense. You'll probably notice that one arrangement is better than the other. Fill out the worksheet to record your two arrangements and put a star next to the one you feel is strongest.

Now, look at the Organization row of the BHP Writing Rubric and review the criteria for Organization with your class. Then, using your knowledge of essay organization, write a few sentences about why your starred arrangement is superior. Be prepared to discuss your ideas with the class!

ANALYZING INVESTIGATION WRITING – ORGANIZATION

Name:

Date:

Directions:

1. Cut up the attached essay along the dotted lines.
2. Find two ways of arranging the paragraphs into an order that makes the most sense for an essay. Write the first word of each paragraph next to the numbers under Arrangements 1 and 2 to show the ordering you picked for each.
3. Place a star next to the arrangement that you feel presents the ideas in the most clear and cohesive way, making the essay and its argument most effective.

Arrangement 1

1. If
2. History
3. While
4. When
5. Historians

Arrangement 2

1. Historians
2. While
3. When
4. History
5. If

4. Write two to three sentences explaining how the organization of the arrangement you starred makes it the stronger of the two essays.



ANALYZING INVESTIGATION WRITING – ORGANIZATION

Student Essay

While it may be easy to ignore the finer print, it can have serious consequences. Close examination is necessary to establish more widespread patterns or trends for certain eras. History is not something that can be told from a single perspective, so it is necessary to use as many lenses as possible. Fernand Braudel explained how history should be examined using different scales: geographical time (a large scale), social time (a smaller amount of time or scale), and individual time (one of the smallest scales). His argument was that by looking at history using these three scales, one could gain a better perspective (Text 2). A historian could study something infinitely small and uncover so much information about an individual person or event, but if this information is not put in the perspective of the larger time period then this individual's history might not make sense.

If someone examines anything up-close for an extended period of time, they run the risk of losing sight of the big picture. If a person refuses to look at the details, however, things get left out. When studying any subject, it is important to adjust the scale, or perspective, to look both outward and inward. People can do this by asking bigger questions while also looking at certain details under a microscope. In history, a significant event in one country may not have any significance in another. On the other hand, sometimes a significant event in just one city may be felt around the world. History must be examined using multiple scales in order to understand not only individual events but also how those small events led to others or how they were viewed by people living not only at the time of the event but also generations after it.

Historians cannot look at every detail nor can they ignore the details to examine trends that happen over centuries. Both of these scales are necessary to create a story that can be understood more completely. Using multiple scales helps the historian situate a person or event within a larger time frame or see how other people or nations responded to this event. The whole of history can be seen as one chain reaction with one event causing another to happen, which then causes many more events and each one of those leads to even more effects. If people simply studied just one of these events without learning about what came before it, after it, and what caused it then the meaning of the entire event would be completely different. This is one of the main reasons why studying things from multiple scales is incredibly important.

ANALYZING INVESTIGATION WRITING – ORGANIZATION

When studying the history of a monument or building, it might not be enough to look only at how it was constructed. In order to get a full history of the architecture, one might also include information on where the materials originated, why it was built in that location, what kind of support it had from the government, and how people viewed it both during the time it was built and for years after. As Dr. Lisa Randall suggests, there should be some Goldilocks Conditions (“just right” conditions) to how you view things. Her example of viewing the Eiffel Tower from a just right perspective shows how choosing the right scale or multiple scales is necessary to get the full picture (Text 5). The more small scale you inspect something, the more difficult it can be to connect events, people, or cultures. If the focus is on too large of a scale then many details will be left out and people may not understand the topic at all. However, if you include multiple scales then the story becomes one of detail while also placing that detail in the context of the place or time period.

History is typically plotted on linear timelines, on which one event comes after the next. If a person mapped out their day, as the timeline activity in Text 4 shows, then the events would happen from the start of that person’s day to the time they went to sleep. The scale would be extremely small and people might learn a bit about the person but probably not much because it’s just one day in the life of a person. However, if you tried switch scales and do that with the history of the Universe then there would be a lot of information in those 24 hours but all the details would be lost. When David Christian created the Big History course, he chose to examine the history of the Universe from multiple scales. His reasoning was that by looking at how humans, Earth, stars, and the Universe as a whole are connected then people would get a much better idea of how humans connect to all of these things (Text 1).

