

What is Structure? What is a Rhetorical Structural Move? *Rhetorical Structural Moves* refer to functional, rhetorical, argument strategies that you intentionally use in a sentence, in a paragraph, or even across more than one paragraph—that develop an argument strategy by serving as “*turning points*” in the argument, i.e. as types of strategies, RSMs help convey *what you want a particular sentence, series of sentences, or a paragraph to do*.

Structure is kind of like a more complex form of Stitching Transition: when a Stitching Transition has a function beyond connecting ideas or connection ACE sections of a paragraph, it performs a *rhetorical structural move*: in other words, in addition to performing stitching, that sentence will also perform another, often more complex function, such as inquiry, juxtaposition, addition, complication, etc. So, a single sentence or collection of sentences can perform more than one function—or even several functions—in your argument!

So, *Rhetorical Structural Moves* contribute to a sentence’s **function** (*what it does*) & **significance** (its meaning), RSMs involve **thoughtful & intentional strategizing**: the *how & why* a writer has chosen to present & organize ideas & evidence in a particular way. Using *Rhetorical Structural Moves* allows a writer to more successfully incorporate and thoughtfully arrange sources & evidence, strategically crafting an argument’s logical flow.

Where can Rhetorical Structural Moves occur? *Rhetorical Structural Moves* can occur just about everywhere in an argument paragraph (in the A-C-or-E sections of a paragraph, or in between them), in a different type of paragraph, in an introductory or concluding paragraph: in Stance Assertions, in Stitching Transitions, when introducing or connecting sources, and in different types of analysis. *Rhetorical Structural Moves* occur in all of the places in a paragraph where I SAY introduces, manages, responds to, agrees or disagrees with, or analyzes THEY SAY evidence. Even your Thesis Assertion can perform a *Rhetorical Structural Move*: such as Declaration. Some sentences even perform more than one Rhetorical Structural Move: for example, a Thesis Statement can perform Declaration and Synthesis, or Declaration and Complication, or Declaration and Qualification.

Every sentence in a paragraph—in an essay—has a function: often its a Rhetorical Structural Move!

Once you determine what you want to say (i.e. in a Thesis OR I SAY Assertion), *RSMs help you to decide the best strategy for saying & supporting what you want to say*. Below are some of the more commonly used RSMs:

Assertion OR Declaration: Establish a claim or stance position (a Declaration will have a stronger Stance)

**Agreeing* (with a difference): Note a qualified common viewpoint you share—up to a point—with source material.

**Disagreeing*: Distance your argument from that of a source who has weighed in on the issue you’re discussing

**Agree & Disagree*: Add complexity by agreeing with one part of the evidence, but disagreeing with another part.

[This is the classic: “on the one hand...on the other hand...” Rhetorical Structural Move]

Definition: Define a *Keyterm* or *Keyphrase*, a key concept, unfamiliar terminology/vocabulary, a foreign word, etc.

Illustration: Show how evidence helps to demonstrate a particular point, or an earlier point

Elaboration: Provide more information that extends or further develops your point or analysis.

Explanation: Explain meaning + significance of an idea, concept, term, context, audience assumption, etc.

Citation: cite or quote a source—use QW to incorporate a full quotation, keeping ideas in context!

**Counter-Argument*: Raise an objection to your argument that will, when followed by a refutation, will ultimately help to strengthen your argument (Graff & Berkenstein call this, “planting a naysayer in your text”).

Contradiction: Disagree in a way that seems antithetical to, goes against, resists, or states the opposite.

Qualification: Limit scope by explaining what *you’re not saying*, or by refining exactly what *you are saying*: this is important in arguments where “shades of meaning” or multiple interpretations are an issue.

Expansion: Further explaining or analyzing a point by expanding or telescoping out, in scope.

Inquiry: Ask a question that you will explore in a paragraph or in later paragraphs; i.e. asking a question to set up an Assertion, introduce cited evidence, or to set up explanation or analysis.

Connection: Bring together two or more points, sources, keyterms, ideas, etc., in order to add complexity, or link for a particular purpose (to show similarity, difference, shades of difference, contrast, etc.)

Introduction: Introduce a point in an argument, a piece of cited evidence, a reason to support an I SAY claim, etc.

Particularize: Make an idea, I SAY Assertion, interpretation, or I SAY Analysis more specific [move from general to particular, or less particular to more particular—or deep.

Synthesize: Draw comparison between two ideas or authors by combining common concerns or arguments.

Contextualization: Situate an argument within a framework or lens (i.e. use a “lens text”); connect your argument to other, usually larger issues, conversations, beliefs, etc.

Distinguish: Demonstrate how an idea or Assertion or Analysis differs from what others say/believe, discern, point out an important difference to contrast ideas, sources, etc.

Addition: adding another example, reason, piece of evidence, or another way of explaining a point or evidence.

Reiteration: Repeat a Keyterm, Keyphrase, or an earlier part of an argument for emphasis, focus, or clarification.

Clarification: Make a challenging or confusing idea, statement, sentence, or explanation clear or comprehensible

Objection: Raise an objection to an idea, claim or argument—either your own or one in a source you are citing.

Reflect: Make sense of deeper meanings or interpretations in ways that add metacommentary about parts of an argument. Reflection is one way to refer back to, further develop, &/or sustain Motive through an essay.

Hypothesize: offer a supposition to introduce an idea or claim (that you plan to prove or refute in the paragraph).

Combination [Rhetorical Structural] Moves: As you know argument paragraphs make at least 3 *major Rhetorical Structural Moves*: **Assert, Cite, Explain**. But can add complexity to ACE Paragraphs by purposefully incorporating additional rhetorical strategies to the basic formula. Be wary of using *too few* RSMs in a paragraph meant to convey a complex idea or that uses multiple sources; otherwise, you risk over-simplifying or confusing rather than adding depth or maintaining clarity. However, also be wary of using too many RSMs in a paragraph, or you risk overwhelming readers or losing focus (digressing). On the one hand, you risk glossing over complexity & potentially boring readers; on the other hand, you obfuscate ideas, alienate readers, digress, or inadvertently convey a tone of superiority.

Below are the basic Rhetorical Structure Moves that together form certain types of paragraphs:

- 1) *Assertion + Citation + Explanation*: A—C—E paragraphs involve the basic structural moves key in argument. Every paragraph in an argumentative essay should contain AT LEAST these Rhetorical Structural Moves.
- 2) *Declaration + Illustration + Elaboration (or Explanation)*: another version of A—C—E with a stronger Stance.
- 3) *Contradiction + Declaration + Illustration + Explanation—OR—Contradiction + Qualification + Illustration + Particularizing*: This the basic form for COUNTERARGUMENT paragraphs that refute obvious objections.
- 4) *Inquiry or Citation + Explanation + Connection + Contextualization + Declaration*: One of many Introductions.
- 5) *Re-Contextualization + Explanation + Reflection OR Re-Contextualization + Elaboration + Expansion*: these are useful for conclusions in that they move argument in a new direction, add context, or point out implications.
- 6) *Expansion + Connection + Elaboration + Illustration + Explanation*: an Expansion paragraph that adds more evidence to further support the I SAY Assertion or continue the I SAY Analysis of the preceding paragraph.

**Some *Rhetorical Structural Moves* are similar to others, they just differ in tone or degree of *emphasis*, or have different shades of meaning. For example, *Illustration* & a *Citation* both give examples, however, a citation quotes a source as evidence, while an illustration shows how something supports the point. Assertions & declarations both state I SAY claims, but declarations are more emphatic & powerful, and convey a stronger Stance & tone.

Directions: For Essay 2 Revisions-in-Progress (RIP) or In-Between-Drafts (IBD): add Rhetorical Structural Moves to your current ACE Paragraphs: ACE + Stance + Stitching + QW + RSM. Choose 1 or a couple of **Rhetorical Structural Move** that create or add to the argument strategy of ACE Paragraphs in your current Essay 2 draft.

1. You will want to examine & label what each paragraph's current argument strategy is—i.e. what the paragraph is already *doing* (what functions its parts currently have).
2. Ask what additional rhetorical strategy or strategies would benefit the argument of each body paragraph: would inquiry better set up an Assertion claim or introduce a source? Would agreeing & disagreeing (on the one hand... on the other hand...) add complexity by better juxtaposing sources? Would particularizing (microscoping in) or generalizing (telescoping out) help readers to better understand analysis? Would distinguishing I Say Stance or Explanation/Analysis from They Say claims from a source help readers better understand your position or the nuances of your Stance? Would providing an example (from a reading or your observation or experience) help elaborate or support the Assertion of a paragraph?

When writing an ACE Synthesis Structure Paragraph, keep in mind that using 2-3 sources only results in a Synthesis Paragraph if you write using Synthesis Sentences, Synthesis Language, and Synthesis Analysis. However, you can take the classical Synthesis Paragraph and add complexity by incorporating other Rhetorical Structural Moves, such as qualification, elaboration, or differentiation into the paragraph.