

WRITING EVIDENCE-BASED CLAIMS

Writing evidence-based claims is a little different from writing stories or just writing about something. You need to **follow a few steps** as you write.

1. ESTABLISH THE CONTEXT

Your readers must know **where your claim is coming from** and **why it's relevant**.

Depending on the scope of your piece and the claim, the context differs. If your whole piece is one claim or if you're introducing the first major claim of your piece, the entire context must be established:

In her article, "Wimbledon Has Sent Me a Message: I'm Only a Second-Class Champion," Venus Williams argues...

Purposes of evidence-based writing vary. In some cases, naming the article and author might be enough to establish the relevance of your claim. In other cases, you might want to supply additional information:

Venus Williams has been an outspoken advocate for equal rights for women. In her article, "Wimbledon Has Sent Me a Message: I'm Only a Second-Class Champion," Venus Williams argues...

If your claim is part of a larger piece with multiple claims, then the context might be simpler:

According to Williams,... *or* In paragraph 5, Williams argues...

2. STATE YOUR CLAIM CLEARLY

How you state your claim is important; it must **precisely and comprehensively express your analysis**. Figuring out how to state claims is a **process**; writers revise them continually as they write their supporting evidence. Here's a claim about Williams' article:

In her article, "Wimbledon Has Sent Me a Message: I'm Only a Second-Class Champion," Venus Williams argues that although Wimbledon outwardly appears to value men and women equally, really they are promoting a message that women's roles and achievements are less important.

Remember, you should continually return and re-phrase your claim as you write the supporting evidence to make sure you are capturing exactly what you want to say. Writing out the evidence always helps you figure out what you really think.

3. ORGANIZE YOUR SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Most claims contain multiple aspects that require different evidence and should be expressed in separate paragraphs. This claim can be **broken down into two parts**:

A description of **WIMBLEDON'S PUBLIC IMAGE**
and
the **TRUE MESSAGE OF WIMBLEDON'S POLICIES**.

3. ORGANIZE YOUR SUPPORTING EVIDENCE (CONT'D)

Here are two paragraphs that support the claim with evidence organized into these two aspects.

A description of WIMBLEDON'S PUBLIC IMAGE :

As a three-time champion at Wimbledon, Williams is qualified to talk about the inequalities she sees at the tournament. What spectators see is that "winners receive the same trophy and honorary membership", and that "the two photographs of last year's men's and women's champions are hung side by side, proudly and equally" (44-46). To "the general public", it appears that Wimbledon treats their players the same, and that "the men's and women's games have the same value" (61-62).

A description of the TRUE MESSAGE OF WIMBLEDON'S POLICIES.

However, Williams uses her inside knowledge and experiences to pull back the curtain on the elite All England Club. She accounts for the exact amounts that each winner receives, including that "the winner of the ladies' singles receives £30,000 less than the men's winner" (28-29). She even provides readers with Wimbledon's defense, which is "that women's tennis is worth less for a variety of reasons; it says, for example, that because men play a best of five sets game they work harder for their prize money" (52-54). Ultimately, Williams argues that "Wimbledon's stance devalues the principles of meritocracy and diminishes the years of hard work [of] women" (33-34) and that the All England Club "can only be trying to make a social and political point, one that is out of step with modern society" (88-89).

Notice the word, "However," starting the second paragraph. **Transitional phrases** like this one aid the organization by showing how the ideas relate to each other.

4. PARAPHRASE AND QUOTE

Written evidence from texts can be paraphrased or quoted. It's up to the writer to decide which works better for each piece of evidence. Paraphrasing is **putting the author's words into your own**. This works well when the author originally expresses the idea you want to include across many sentences. You might write it more briefly. The first line from paragraph 3 paraphrases the evidence from Williams' text. The ideas are hers, but the exact way of writing is not.

However, Williams uses her inside knowledge and experiences to pull back the curtain on the elite All England Club.

Some evidence is better quoted than paraphrased. If an author has found the quickest way to phrase the idea or the words are especially strong, you might want to **use the author's words**. The second line from paragraph 2 quotes Williams exactly, incorporating her vivid image.

What spectators see ...that "the two photographs of last year's men's and women's champions are hung side by side, proudly and equally" (44-46).

5. REFERENCE YOUR EVIDENCE

Whether you paraphrase or quote the author's words, you must include **the exact location where the ideas come from**. Direct quotes are written in quotation marks. How writers include the reference can vary depending on the piece and the original text. Here the writer puts the line numbers from the original text in parentheses at the end of the sentence.