

Elaboration Structure—Anecdote

Definition: An anecdote is a little story that proves your point.

When to Use: Anecdotes work best after another type of elaboration. In the “In context” below, the writer uses a Cause/Effect chunk to explain the idea and then reinforces it with the Anecdote.

Completion Checklist:

1. Does the anecdote support the idea in the topic sentence (*without overlapping with the other topic sentences*)?
2. Does it include some vivid imagery?
3. Does it include a transition word at the beginning of the anecdote?

Length: 4-7 sentences.

In Context:

The
bolded
section is
the
anecdote!

One way I can promote healthy eating is by growing my own garden. When I plant a garden, I will get a hefty crop of carrots and cabbages. Having this extra healthy food will allow me to donate some of my crop to my friends and family. This will encourage my community to add veggies to their dinner, which will improve their overall diet. **In fact, my family didn't eat a lot of vegetables when I was a kid, but I remember how that changed when my neighbor planted a garden in her back yard. It was filled with Romaine lettuce, carrots, beets, tomatoes, and much more! I remember her walking towards our front door with a basket full of colorful veggies and couldn't wait to see the awesome new dishes my mom would concoct.** Clearly, Mrs. Carr's garden helped my family eat a more healthy diet.

Common transition words: In fact, for example, when, one day, years ago, after, before long, then, I remember

Samples:

- In fact, I remember the time that I forgot to study for the Ecosystems test in Mr. Mervin's class. After I bombed the test, he pulled me aside and offered to help me get organized. We spent the better part of an hour using highlighters to color-code my agenda to budget for all of my activities—including time to study for the test retake. I'm glad to report that I followed the schedule and aced the retake!
- One day when I was a little younger, I went to an animal shelter and I saw all types of animals. Most of the animals were sick or getting help from the doctors. I remember picking up a cat, and it was so skinny I could see and feel the bones as I wrapped my hands slowly around its stomach. All of those animals made me want to start an animal shelter to save and protect animals just like them and get the help that all animals need.
- When I was younger, my dad would always take my brother and me to a lake to go fishing and walking. We didn't have enough money to buy rods, so we used some soda cans we had and wrapped some line around them. While we were fishing, a man came up to us and asked us why we didn't have any rods, so we told him. He ended up giving us the money we needed and wouldn't let us pay him back. I want to pay it forward, so I want to create a foundation to get kids off the couch.