

Sample Paragraphs for a Relational Analysis Essay

Example 1

In her article, “I Ain’t Sayin’ He’s a Gold Digger”, author Hanna Rosin claims that 40 percent of wives earn more than their husbands, and their husbands, as a result, are unable to cope with the shift in this power dynamic. She **provides the testimony** of “Andy,” a stay-at-home dad of twins, to exemplify this tension: “Andy likes watching the toddlers, but he is wistful about his old life, and somewhat defensive about his new one. These days when his wife suggests that he should go back to work, Andy feels ‘terrified.’ It’s been a long time, and he’s lost the stomach for the outside world.” In this example, Rosin **illustrates** the resentment that men may feel toward their breadwinning wives. Rosin **uses adjectives** such as “wistful,” “defensive,” and “terrified” to support her claim that men are insecure in their roles at home, and have been robbed of their masculinity.

Andy Hinds, the stay-at-home dad whom Rosin interviewed, has responded to her piece in his essay, “Hanna Rosin Turned Me into a Caricature.” **Hinds claims that Rosin greatly oversimplifies his situation.** He **clarifies** the example she provides by filling in more details: he works part-time teaching college English, taking on small carpentry projects, and participating in an online community of blogging fathers. He writes, “Of course I have fond memories and endless stories of manly derring-do on the construction site, but these days I would far rather spend time with my kids than with a bunch of smelly knuckleheads who think there’s nothing funnier than to accuse one another of being gay all day long.” By **providing more detail** of his life today, as contrasted to what transpired on a typical workday in his “old life”, Hinds makes Rosin’s claim that he misses working construction sound ridiculous. **While Rosin might suggest that** stay-at-home dads are lost without a traditional job, Hinds **complicates** this claim. He reveals that there is more to his life— and to his masculine identity—than being the primary breadwinner in his home. If anything, Hinds suggests that he and his family are happy, and that his situation is a way to make the “shifting gender paradigm” work.

Topic Sentence: presents sub-claim from the **essay writer’s** argument

Intro to quote/attibution

Quote: “meaty” quoted from the text

Analysis/Explanation of Rhetorical Work: explains how the quote works; identifies the moves it makes and how/why they are likely to work to persuade the audience; draws comparisons and contrasts among the sources

Example 2

Both **Smolkin's** article and **Poniewozik's** article examine the complex role of comedian Jon Stewart in serious political discourse. **Smolkin concludes her essay by arguing** that there is a role for serious journalism in a marketplace that cares less and less about the news: "The major news of our time is grimly serious, and only real news organizations will provide the time, commitment and professionalism necessary" to bring hidden stories to light (25). She also **argues** that there is a role for the comic-seriousness of Stewart: "Perhaps 'The Daily Show' can teach us little, but remind us of a lot: Don't underestimate your audience. Be relevant. Be bold" (25). In **drawing this final contrast** between "serious" journalists who sometimes cover the news and the comedians that make the news "relevant" to audiences, **Smolkin characterizes** Stewart as a "little" less serious than journalists, but necessary.

On the other hand, **Poniewozik argues** that Stewart and his fellow Comedy Central star Stephen Colbert are likely more serious than even they would have us believe. **Poniewozik examines** comments made by Stewart and Colbert before their October 2010 "Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear" and **identifies** Stewart's thesis: "the national conversation has become dominated by the loudest, craziest 15% to 20% of Americans — the Koran burners, the flag burners, the truthers, the birthers, the town-hall screamers, the folks who compare opponents to Hitler or the Taliban — and that they're rewarded with attention from journalists and politicians who should know better." **In Poniewozik's view**, journalists have been duped by the "craziest" minority of Americans to give that minority a seriousness that they do not deserve and that the journalists should not give them. **Poniewozik gives brief examples** of who makes up that minority with his list of extreme types. In his next sentence, **Poniewozik clarifies** his argument: "In other words, two comedians are taking it upon themselves to say America is making itself look ridiculous." By **showing how** the comedians Stewart and Colbert are behaving rationally and responsibly, and by making us aware of the irony of the situation ("two comedians"), **Poniewozik argues** that the comedians are more serious than the journalists. This is a point that the managing editor of the *American Journalism Review*, Smolkin, writing for journalists, doesn't seem willing to concede.

Topic Sentence: presents sub-claim from the **essay writer's** argument

Intro to quote/attribution

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Analysis/Explanation of Rhetorical Work: explains how the quote works; identifies the moves it makes and how/why they are likely to work to persuade the audience; draws comparisons and contrasts among the sources