**Commentary Anchor Chart**

**Questions for Writing Commentary – Ask Yourself:**

* **What** do I need to make sure the reader understands about this evidence? (Re-explain the evidence.)
* **Why** is this evidence especially important?
* **How** does it prove and support the claim?

**The Importance of BECAUSE**

“Because” is a word that tells a reader they are about to hear an explanation. It signals **significance** and **relationship**. It’s an effective word to use when writing commentary. Take a look:

* These statistics are important **because** they point to the effects of poor nutrition and how serious the school lunch problem is.
* Leaders and decision-makers must pay attention to such experiences **because** they prove that there is a relationship between what we eat and how well we learn.

**Strong Commentary Verbs**from *Rules for Writers* by Diana Hacker

Use these verbs when writing commentary. Note the two verbs underlined in the sentences above.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| acknowledges | compares | insists | claims |
| adds | confirms | notes | underscores |
| admits | declares | observes | exemplifies |
| agrees | denies | points outs | implies |
| argues | emphasizes | rejects | proves |
| asserts | highlights | reports | exhibits |
| believes | illustrates | responds | suggests |

**Commentary Examples & Practice**

**Debatable Claim:** My school lunch isn’t as healthy as it should be.

**#1**

**Factual Evidence**: A single serving of chicken nuggets (5 pieces) can contain up to 500 milligrams of sodium, the total amount of salt children should consume daily. ([www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com))

**Commentary:** These numbers are important because they point to the effects of poor nutrition and how serious the school lunch problem is. Chicken nuggets, commonly served to students in school lunchrooms, exemplify the poor nutritional quality of school food. If children eat that much sodium on a regular basis, they are headed for a life of weight gain and high blood pressure.

**#2**

**Anecdotal Evidence:** My friends and I always feel sluggish after lunch. Tanesha said, “I can hardly stay awake in art class after rushing through our 20 minute lunch.”

**Commentary**: Tanesha’s statement about feeling tired after inhaling her lunch confirms the negative effects that foods high in carbohydrates and sugar can have on young minds that need protein and vegetables, brain food, to be more lively and active class participants. If she ate more nutritious food at lunch, she might be more awake for art class. Leaders and decision-makers must pay attention to such experiences because they prove that there is a relationship between what we eat and how well we learn.

***You Try!***

**Debatable Claim:** School lunch isn’t as healthy as it should be.

**Factual Evidence:** “A study by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2006 found that 23.5 percent of high schools offered fast food from places like Pizza Hut and Taco Bell” (*The New York Times*).

**Your Commentary:** *don’t forget to use those strong commentary verbs!*

(re-explain the facts)

(tell what’s important about them)

(explain how this evidence proves and supports the claim)