

GWT Component 3: Development

Development is how you as a writer elaborate on and support your thesis. It is important that you develop your thesis with points that are

- specific (precise and detailed)
- cogent (clear, logical, and convincing), and
- relevant (applicable to the topic).

Evidence that is too general, superficial, sparse, or irrelevant will not earn you a high score.

Dr. Karen Russikoff, a Cal Poly Pomona English professor, coined the acronym **FRIED** to provide an easily-remembered prompt of ways to develop your supporting points with specific details.

FRIED stands for

- **Facts:**
Information known to be true. Sometimes facts contain numbers—dates, statistics, amounts—but can also be a well-known concept or an agreed-upon statement such as “Cal Poly has a ‘learn by doing’ philosophy.”
- **Reasons:**
Answers to the question “why?”
- **Incidents:**
Events that happened to you or someone you know.
- **Examples:**
These follow the phrases *such as*, *for example*, *for instance* and the like. They are often general or hypothetical illustrations rather than actual experiences.
- **Details:**
Adjectives, adverbs, and specific nouns and verbs that add spice and color.

FRIED is not an exhaustive list—these are not the only ways to develop your writing. Additionally, you will notice that there is overlap between the different components; for example, details may also be examples, and an incident may also function as a reason. Don’t get bogged down with labeling the type of development or with feeling that you need to use every FRIED. Instead, use FRIEDs as a mnemonic device that can help you quickly think of ways to add specificity when you are under the time pressure of the GWT.

Here’s an example of how to use FRIEDs to improve the development of your ideas, using a GWT practice topic:

GWT Practice Topic #7

Portable Electronic Communications

With cell phones and laptop computers with wireless connections, we can be connected to our jobs, our families, and our friends 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We are connected wherever we are, whatever we are doing. We can conduct

business while washing clothes, talk to a lover while shopping, discuss plans for surgery at the airport lounge. Does this electronic lifestyle make us more efficient? Does it make us happier? Does it cause more stress?

In a well-organized essay answer the following question:

Are there times when we should just turn off our devices and be out of touch? Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of being connected to work, family and friends 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Support your ideas with specific details from your own experience.

The following response is NOT well developed because it is too vague and superficial:

The advantages of being connected are apparent to us daily. But even though using electronic devices can be convenient and efficient, we should not always be connected through them. Sometimes we need to turn them off. Americans should learn to take a break from constant connection because it causes strained relationships. We can't really focus on the people who are with us when we are busy texting. The people who are right near us end up being neglected.

By adding FRIEDs, the writer of the following example improved the previously undeveloped paragraph:

Most Americans own cell phones and other mobile devices [**fact**], a fact that points to the importance of recognizing the issues related to constant connection. The advantages of being connected are apparent to us daily. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, texting, and mobile apps [**details**] are great for letting us stay in touch friends and family [**example**]. And in the business realm, electronic devices allow business people to connect with clients and collaborate with co-workers even when they're not in the office [**example**]. But even though using smartphones, tablets, and laptops [**details**] can be convenient and efficient, we should not always be connected through these electronic devices. Sometimes we need to turn them off.

Americans should learn to take a break from constant connection because it causes strained relationships [**reason**]. We can't really focus on the people who are with us when we are busy texting; therefore, the people who are right near us end up being neglected [**details**]. We've all gone to hang out with friends and had the experience of no one really talking because everyone was fixated on their cell phones instead [**example**]. Moreover, the constant connection of electronic devices has caused not only problems with friends but also in my family. My mom's position as a bank executive requires her to respond to texts from work at all hours [**details**], even during dinner and vacations. When we were growing up and even now, we resent that we can't talk about our days at dinner without being interrupted by a text. This constant need to be electronically tethered to her job causes our family a lot of stress because my mom can never truly relax and enjoy time with family [**incident**].

As you can see, the addition of FRIEDs has transformed an undeveloped paragraph into what turned into more than one paragraph with an abundance of specific support.

As an exercise to prepare for the GWT, practice coming up with facts, reasons, instances, examples, and details to support an essay with an opposing thesis—that it's important to stay connected to work, family, and friends through electronic devices.