

## Logical line of argument

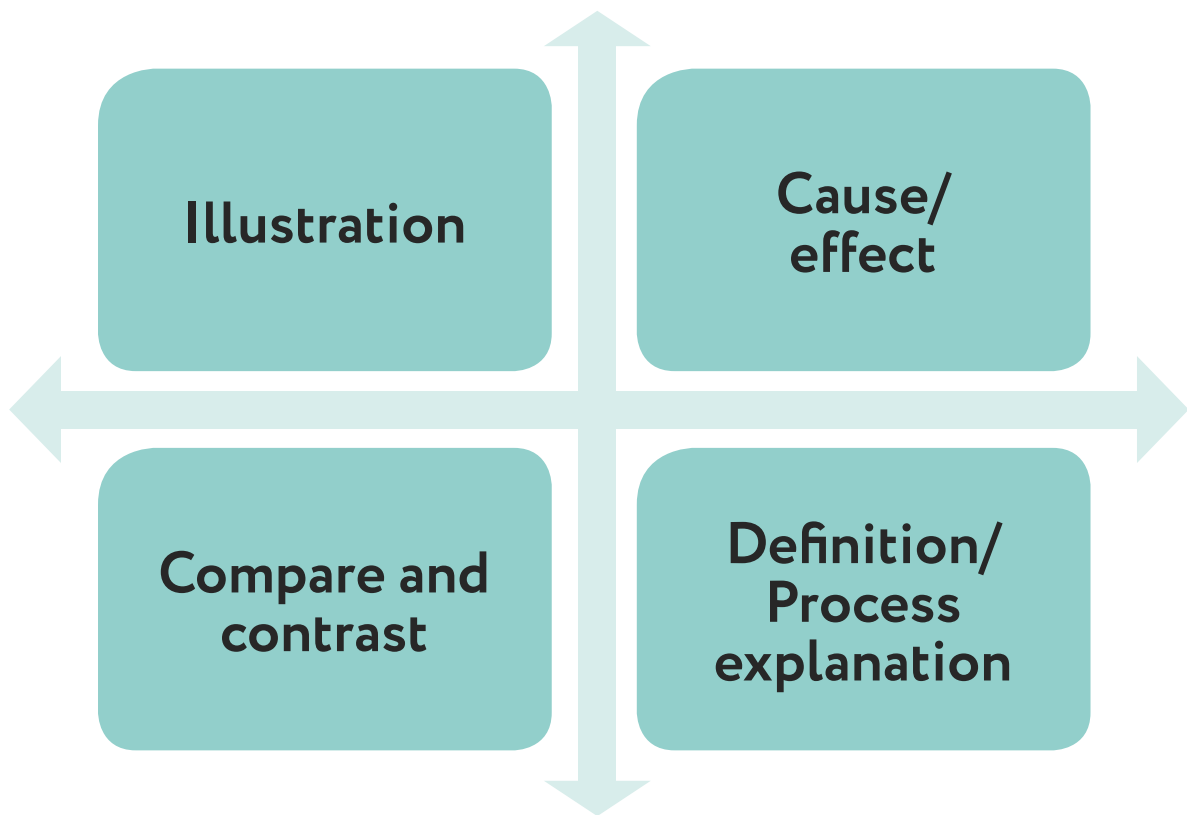
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The term ‘line of argument’ refers to a logical or argumentative thread that moves the reader through a paper, and ensures overall **coherence**. This ‘logical line’ must be apparent to readers, or they will get lost and bored. There are four commonly used logical patterns. These are by no means mutually exclusive. You can use combinations of these logical patterns to help build up your argument.

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Organise your ideas into a logical line of argument



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### Illustration

This pattern gives concrete form to an abstract idea through examples or illustrations. When using this pattern make sure that the point you're illustrating is very clear and that your example is as specific as possible. It is also important to make sure your example directly supports general point.

**EXAMPLE:**

**General idea:** Attacks against civilians by the armed forces are intensifying in South Sudan.

**Illustration:** During 2013, 1,898 separate incidents of physical or sexual assault were recorded by Save the Children. This is more than the last five years combined.

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Cause/  
effect

This pattern is very common. Cause/effect statements identify specific causes that lead to a specific effect. These statements need to be closely linked.

Remember that underlying causes are more interesting than superficial ones. Similarly, long-term effects are more interesting than immediate ones.

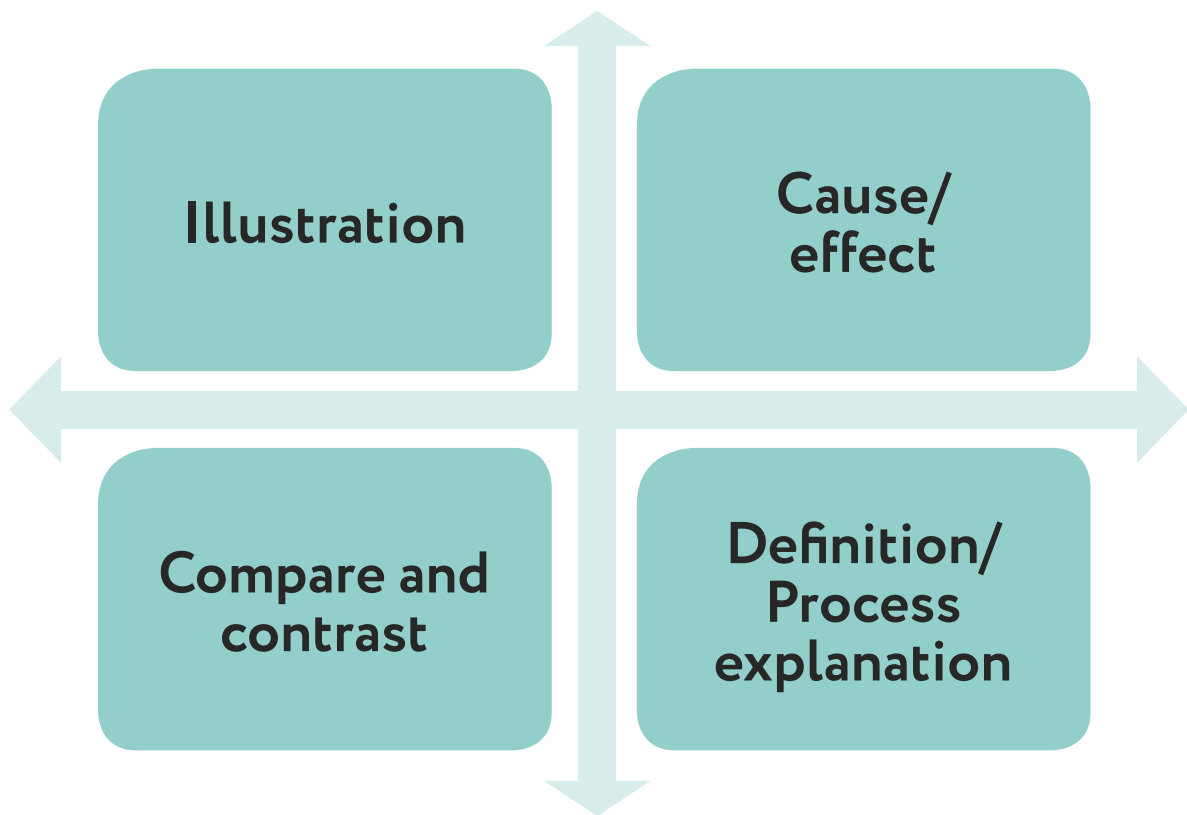
**EXAMPLE:**

**Cause:** Vehicle emissions are a major cause of environmental pollution in Nairobi. *What about underlying causes? For example, there are more cars on the road because Kenya's middle class is growing.*

**Effect:** This results in bad air quality in and around the capital. *What about long term effects? For example, an increase in respiratory diseases in urban areas.*

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### Compare and contrast

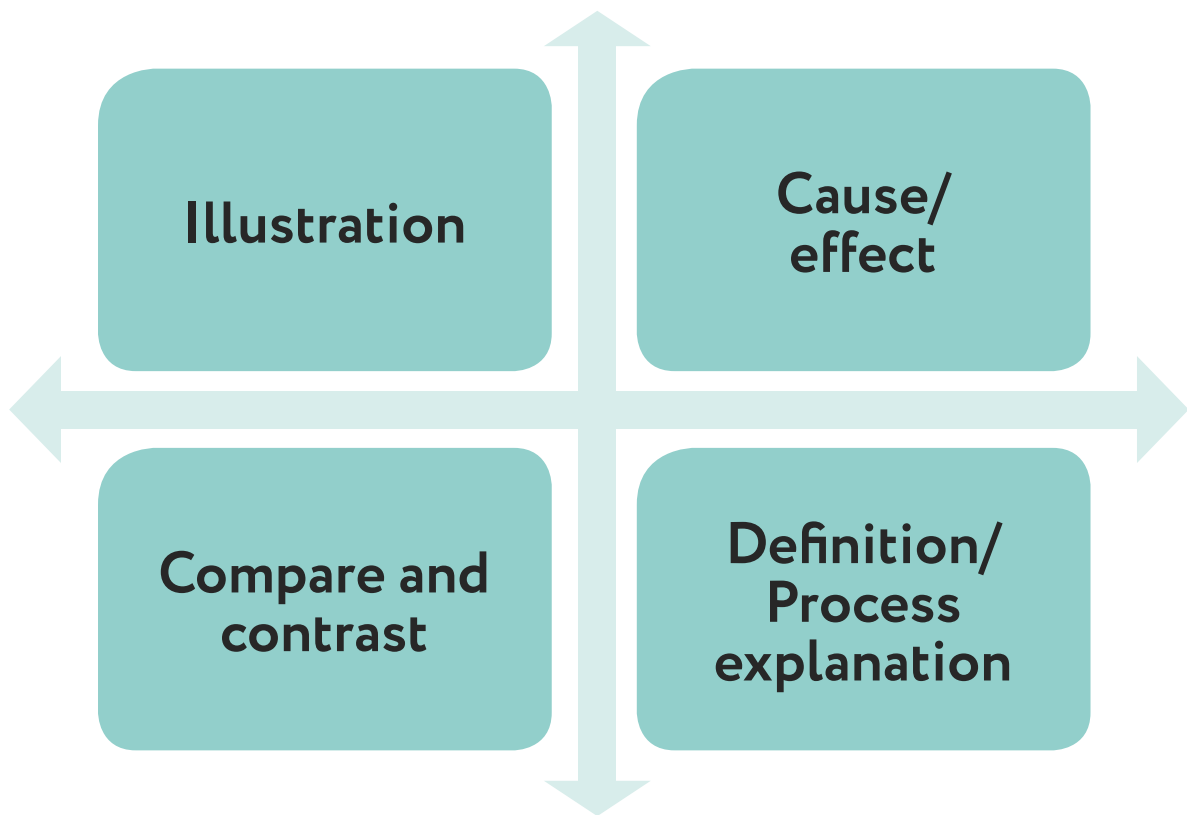
This pattern compares and contrasts similarities between things/people. To use this effectively, ensure that you have reason for linking the two 'items'. If the link is not clear, the comparison will be confusing.

**EXAMPLE:**

Malawi, Niger, Rwanda and Uganda differ in many respects but share conditions of general resource scarcity and all rely heavily on external resources to finance public health care. They have followed similar approaches to health financing. However, progress on national maternal health indicators over the past 20 years has been uneven. Maternal mortality ratios for Malawi and particularly Rwanda have fallen consistently since 2000.

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**Definition/  
Process  
explanation**

This pattern explains how something works. When using it, remember to define your key terms as clearly as possible (if possible using illustration). In general, definition operates as a *step* in an argument although in technical/historical publications it can be the central plank.

**EXAMPLE:**

Over recent years, significant efforts have been made to improve nutritional response at global and field levels. These include IASC-endorsed initiatives, such as the cluster approach; donor-led initiatives, such as pooled funding mechanisms; and efforts across the board to strengthen the humanitarian system.



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In all arguments logical connectors are key

- Logical connectors ('transitions') are so important.
- Without clear connectors, your publication will be hard to follow.
- So make sure your paper is peppered with words or phrases like:

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**'Therefore' 'But' 'With this in mind' 'So' 'Like'**  
**'To illustrate' 'In contrast' 'Nevertheless'**