

English — Writing Guide

Write one analytical paragraph (Claim-Evidence-Explain structure) that explains how Emily Dickinson uses figurative language in the poem "Hope" is the thing with feathers to show that hope is strong.

The task

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Pitched at: English 10 student studying figurative language in poetry

What a good one does

- States a clear claim that names at least one figurative device and links it to the idea that hope is strong
- Quotes exact words from the poem as evidence, with quotation marks
- Explains how the quoted words create meaning, not just what the device is called
- Connects the explanation back to the poem's message about hope's strength or endurance
- Stays as ONE paragraph with clear C-E-E order, not three separate chunks
- Uses only details that actually appear in the poem — no invented lines or outside facts

How to build it

1. Reread the poem and underline every place hope is described as a bird (the extended metaphor)
2. Choose 2-3 phrases that best show hope's strength, e.g. 'never stops - at all -', 'sore must be the storm', 'in Extremity, It asked a crumb'
3. Write the Claim sentence: name the device (extended metaphor) and say it shows hope is strong
4. Write the Evidence sentence(s): quote the exact words, keeping Dickinson's dashes and capitals
5. Write the Explain sentence(s): say what the image suggests (endurance, resilience, selflessness) and tie it to the paragraph's claim
6. Reread the paragraph as one block — check it flows as a single argument, not three disconnected parts
7. Check every quotation matches the poem exactly

A model — to study, not to copy

Read it once for the whole, then again for the moves listed after it. Then close it — the next one is your student's to write, without this one open.

In "'Hope' is the thing with feathers," Emily Dickinson uses an extended metaphor to show that hope is remarkably strong and enduring. She imagines hope as a small bird that "perches in the soul" and "never stops - at all -," an image that suggests hope's song is constant, surviving every circumstance without pause. Dickinson deepens this idea by describing the bird enduring the worst conditions: "sore must be the storm / That could abash the little Bird," which shows that only an extreme, almost impossible force could silence hope, proving how resilient it truly is. Finally, she notes that even "in Extremity," the bird never "asked a crumb" of her, showing that hope gives comfort selflessly and asks nothing in return, no matter how difficult life becomes. Through this bird metaphor, Dickinson suggests that hope is not fragile but a quiet, tireless strength that persists through any hardship.

The moves it makes

- Claim sentence names the device (extended metaphor) and states the point about strength right away
- Evidence is lifted word-for-word from the poem, including Dickinson's dashes and capitalization
- Explain sentences unpack each quote's suggestion (constancy, resilience, selflessness) rather than repeating the quote
- A closing sentence returns to the overall claim, tying all three pieces of evidence together
- Everything used (bird, storm, crumb, Extremity) comes directly from the poem's three stanzas — nothing is invented

Your turn

Ways to begin

- In "'Hope' is the thing with feathers," Emily Dickinson uses [device] to show that hope is strong because...
- Emily Dickinson's extended metaphor of hope as a bird reveals how strong and enduring hope can be.
- Through personification and metaphor, Dickinson presents hope as a small but unbreakable force.

The parts, in order

1. Claim: name the device(s) and state the point about hope's strength

2. Evidence: quote 2-3 exact phrases from the poem

3. Explain: unpack what each quote suggests about hope's endurance or power

4. Closing link: tie the explanation back to the overall claim in one final sentence

Before handing it in

- [] Does the first sentence name a specific device and state the claim about strength?
- [] Are all quotations copied exactly, with quotation marks and Dickinson's dashes?
- [] Does each piece of evidence have its own explanation, not just a description?
- [] Does the paragraph read as ONE connected argument rather than three separate parts?
- [] Is everything in the paragraph actually in the poem (no invented lines or facts)?
- [] Does the final sentence return to the idea that hope is strong?
- [] Is it one paragraph, not split into multiple paragraphs?

Watch out

- Naming the device but never explaining it — check that every quote is followed by at least one sentence of explanation
- Misquoting or paraphrasing the poem's words instead of quoting exactly — check quotes against the original text
- Writing three disconnected mini-paragraphs instead of one flowing C-E-E paragraph — check for transition words linking the parts
- Explaining what the bird does literally instead of what it means about hope — check that the explanation mentions hope's strength, not just bird behavior
- Adding outside information not in the poem (e.g. Dickinson's biography) — check every detail traces back to the poem's lines

When the piece is written, upload it as a Performance Review with this guide as the prior guide: it comes back read against the criteria above, with what to strengthen next.

Built for the task: Write one analytical paragraph (C-E-E) explaining how Emily Dickinson uses figurative language in "Hope" is the thing with feathers to show that hope is strong. Guru Seal: the criteria, the steps and the model were independently checked by separate AI systems against the source text before this guide reached you.