

# PARAGRAPH DEVELOPMENT



## Writing

ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC SUPPORT

[www.mun.ca/writingcentre](http://www.mun.ca/writingcentre)

### POINTS TO CONSIDER

**Topic Sentence** - introduces the main idea/claim

**Unity** – establishes clear association between topic sentences and supporting sentences

**Coherence** – presents smooth progression through the discussion

**Evidence** - research

**Examination** - critical thinking

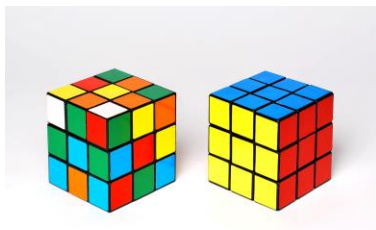
### PARAGRAPH DEVELOPMENT

The topic sentence initiates each paragraph presenting an idea that promises a thorough explanation and support in the sentences that follow. Such a paragraph demonstrates your critical thinking skills. If it does not, it is not an adequately developed paragraph. All the sentences work together to fulfill the promise. That is, you will influence your audience through clear and convincing ideas. Your ideas will engage the reader.

Be sure you present to your audience a series of ideas related, connected, and supported. The audience will follow your ideas because of effective linking devices that establish relationships between ideas.

The thesis statement controlling idea(s) (introduction) is the basis for the essay paragraphs.

Patterns for paragraphs will vary according to the task and the discipline.



RUBIK'S CUBE

### PARAGRAPH ORGANIZATION

#### TOPIC SENTENCE

- Usually, it is first sentence in the paragraph.
- Introduces the topic for that one paragraph.
- Sentences that follow will display the writer's critical thinking on the main idea of the topic sentence.

#### EVIDENCE

- Logically organized information confirm the claim in the topic sentence.
- Information is from various sources to endorse the claim.
- Information could include reasons, facts, examples, statistics, expert opinions, and/or anecdotes.
- All information must be reliable.
- Cite all evidence according to the assigned citation style dictated by the discipline.
- **Please refer to the citation style assigned by your program.**

#### EXAMINATION

- Demonstrate how the facts support the claim.
- Appropriate analysis discussion will convince the audience, thus leading to credibility.
- **Critical thinking is analyzing and evaluating an idea for a personal conclusion.**

#### CONCLUDING SENTENCE (OPTIONAL)

- Finish the paragraph by reminding the audience of claim discussed.

#### TRANSITIONAL SENTENCE (OPTIONAL)

- Consists of two components: paragraph topic reminder and introduction of next paragraph topic.
- Can replace topic sentence for all paragraphs except the first paragraph.
- Functions as a cohesive tool.

**RHETORICAL STRATEGIES (PATTERNS)**

- 1) PROCESS PARAGRAPH
  - Indicates steps in a process.
  - Indicates how to do something.
  
- 2) DEFINITION PARAGRAPH
  - Defines a term in great details.
  - Begins with a formal definition followed by an extended definition.
  
- 3) CAUSE AND EFFECT PARAGRAPH
  - Provides a sequence of events that lead to one another.
  
- 4) COMPARE/CONTRAST PARAGRAPH
  - Demonstrates similarities and/or differences.
  - Uses either a point-by-point or block structure.
  
- 5) ARGUMENTATIVE PARAGRAPH
  - Can use any pattern to create the argument.
  - Uses counter-argument(s) if supportive.
  
- 6) CLASSIFICATION PARAGRAPH
  - Categorizes shared ideas.
  - Assists audience to see the idea as a whole.
  
- 7) EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH
  - Supports any idea with minimal details or expanded details.
  
- 8) ANALOGY PARAGRAPH
  - Uses other ideas to help the audience comprehend the topic better.
  - May begin with a simile or metaphor.
  
- 9) DESCRIPTION PARAGRAPH
  - Describes the idea in detail creating a concrete picture.
  
- 10) NARRATION PARAGRAPH
  - Tells a story.
  
- 11) PROBLEM-SOLUTION PARAGRAPH
  - Discusses a problem, a solution, or both.

**PARAGRAPH PATTERNS**

- Patterns are not intended to be alone.
- A writer may combine more than one pattern to present the assigned essay.
- Language structure, specialized vocabulary, and punctuation all play a significant role helping the audience to comprehend the claim.

**COHERENT PARAGRAPH STRATEGIES**

- a) Use appropriate transitional signals to bridge ideas
  - Function like sign posts
  - Establish relationship between supporting details
  - Use transition phrases, conjunctive adverbs, coordinating conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions, and other signals
- b) Repeat key nouns, pronouns, and substitutes
  - Establish sentence flow
- c) Use parallel structure
  - Emphasize connections
- d) Organize supporting details logically for impact
  - Arrange according to the assigned topic and purpose
  - Use chronological, emphatic, general to specific, specific to general, spatial, climactic, or problem to solution order

**Sources:**

(MLA 9<sup>th</sup> Edition)

Oshima, Alice, and Ann Hogue. "Unity and Coherence." *Longman Academic Writing Series 4*, 5th Ed. ed., Pearson Education, Upper Saddle River, NJ, 2015, pp. 26–40.

Troyka, Lynn Quitman, and Douglas Hesse. "Writing Paragraphs." *Simon & Schuster Handbook for Writers*, 4th ed., Pearson Prentice Hall, Toronto, 2006, pp. 75–104.

**Contact us**

**Writing Centre SN-2053**

**writing@mun.ca**

**709-864-3168**