

1 ☐ **PARAGRAPH DEVELOPMENT**2 ☐

- A paragraph is an organized set of sentences that deal with a single topic.
- Well-organized paragraphs provide the structure in our writing, allowing us to develop the major points we wish to convey to the reader and move smoothly from one point to another.
- And they also provide visual structure to the page, indicating subdivisions of our theme or changes of topic.

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- Long, unbroken blocks of text often appear daunting to the reader.
- They look intimidating and can prove difficult to navigate.
- Paragraphs help remove some of that “intimidation factor.”
- They’re used to break the paper into manageable, accessible “chunks” of information that lead the reader through a logical progression of important points.

4 ☐

- Good paragraphing also greatly assists your readers in following a piece of writing.
- You can have radical ideas, but if those ideas aren't presented in an organized fashion, you will lose your readers and fail to achieve your goals in writing.
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5 ☐**The Basic Rule**

- Keep one idea to one paragraph
- If you begin to transition into a new idea, it belongs in a new paragraph.
- There are some simple ways to tell if you are on the same topic or a new one.
- You can have one idea and several bits of supporting evidence within a single paragraph.

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- You can also have several points in a single paragraph as long as they relate to the overall topic of the paragraph.
- If the single points start to get long, then perhaps elaborating on each of them and placing them in their own paragraphs is the route to go.
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7 ☐**Elements of a paragraph**

- To be as effective as possible, a paragraph should contain unity, coherence, a topic sentence, and adequate development.
- As you will see, all of these traits overlap.
- Using and adapting them to your individual purposes will help you construct effective paragraphs.

8 ☐**Unity**

- The entire paragraph should concern itself with a single focus.
- If it begins with one focus or major point of discussion, it should not end with another or wander within different ideas.
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- Example
- "Employees' attitudes at Jonstone Electric Company should be improved. The workers do not feel that they are a working team instead of just individuals. If people felt they were a part of a team, they would not misuse the tools, or deliberately undermine the work of others. Management's attitude toward its employees should also be improved. Managers at Jonstone Electric act as though their employees are incapable of making decisions or doing their own work. Managers treat workers like objects, not human beings."
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- Consider the given example. Note that there are two main ideas presented in this paragraph.
- The topic sentence indicates that the paragraph will deal with the subject of "employees' attitudes," but the paragraph shifts unexpectedly to the topic of "management's attitudes."
- To achieve unity in this paragraph, the writer should begin a new paragraph when the switch is made from employees to managers.
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Coherence

- Coherence is the trait that makes the paragraph easily understandable to a reader.
- You can help create coherence in your paragraphs by creating logical bridges and verbal bridges.
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- Logical bridges
- The same idea of a topic is carried over from sentence to sentence.
- Successive sentences can be constructed in parallel form.
- *e.g. In the first stage, an idea can be generated by using a mind-map and some discussion. In the next stage, a clear plan of action can be produced in the form of a list.*

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- Verbal bridges
- Key words can be repeated in several sentences
- Synonymous words can be repeated in several sentences
- Pronouns can refer to nouns in previous sentences
- Transition words can be used to link ideas from different sentences
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- Example
- "Schools should offer courses to help students with the problems of unemployment. Such a course might begin with a discussion of where to find employment, then cover resume writing

and interviewing. Algebra and history don't help students with real-world needs. They are required courses that students aren't interested in, and this is frustrating for students who would rather learn about other subjects. If schools offered job-skills courses, students would be well prepared for the difficult task of finding a job once they finish school."

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- Consider the example given above. In this paragraph, the writer begins with the topic of job-skills courses, but veers off onto the topic of algebra and history before returning to the subject of courses on employment.
- As a result, the paragraph is disjointed and difficult to understand.

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Topic Sentence

- The topic sentence is a sentence that indicates in a general way what idea or thesis the paragraph is going to deal with.
- Although not all paragraphs have clear-cut topic sentences, an easy way to make sure your reader understands the topic of the paragraph is to put your topic sentence near the beginning of the paragraph.
- Regardless of whether you include an explicit topic sentence or not, you should be able to easily summarize what the paragraph is about.

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- Examples
- "Many television cartoons contain an unhealthy amount of violence."
- Notice that this sentence clearly identifies that the key topic of the paragraph is violence in television cartoons.
- It also indicates that the remainder of the paragraph will discuss how much violence cartoons typically contain, and how/why this violence is unhealthy for viewers.

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- "An increasing number of people in America are enjoying the benefits of organically grown fruits and vegetables."
- This topic sentence indicates that the remainder of the paragraph will cover the trend in the United States toward eating organic foods.
- The reader can also anticipate learning more in this paragraph about the specific benefits of organic foods.

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Adequate development

- The topic (which is introduced by the topic sentence) should be discussed fully and adequately.
- Again, this varies from paragraph to paragraph, depending on the author's purpose, but writers should be wary of paragraphs that only have two or three sentences.
- A good rule of thumb to follow is to make sure that a paragraph contains four to five sentences which explain and elaborate on the topic sentence.

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- Example
- "The topics of leadership and management are both similar to and different from one another in several important ways. To be effective, a manager should be a good leader. And good leaders know how to manage people effectively."

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- Consider the paragraph given above.
- The topic sentence promises to discuss "several" points of comparison and contrast between leadership and management, but the remainder of the paragraph falls short of fulfilling this promise.
- Only one point of comparison is raised, and this point is left unexplained.

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- Several questions remain unanswered: How are leaders different from managers? In what specific ways are the two alike? Why must a manager be a good leader to be effective? Why must good leaders know how to manage people effectively?
- To achieve adequate development in this paragraph, these questions should be addressed.

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- Generally speaking, a paragraph should contain between three and five sentences, all of which help clarify and support the main idea of the paragraph.
- When a writer begins a new paragraph, it signals to the reader that the writer is changing thoughts or ideas, or is moving on to discuss a different aspect of a main idea.

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- Here is an example of a paragraph of stacked sentences that lacks logical and verbal bridges:
- *My dogs are named Cooper and Calli. Cooper is a Golden retriever and Akita mix. He is a male. Calli is a shepherd, Husky and wolf mix. She is a female. Calli was rescued from the pound. Cooper was purchased from a breeder. They are close in age. They play together all the time.*

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- Revised to incorporate bridges and varied sentence structure, the paragraph would read as follows:
- *My dogs, Cooper and Calli, are best friends. Cooper, a male retriever and Akita mix, came from a breeder. On the other hand, Calli, a shepherd, husky and wolf mix, was rescued from the pound. Because they are close in age, they play together all the time.*

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- Still, the paragraph lacks adequate development. Adequate development is achieved through details, including facts, description, examples, quotes, analysis, explanation, and evaluation. A more developed paragraph would read like this:

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- *My dogs, Cooper and Calli, are best friends. Cooper, a male golden retriever and Akita mix, came from a breeder. On the other hand, Calli, a shepherd, husky and wolf mix, was rescued from the pound. Because they are close in age, they play together all the time. For example, the two dogs hunt for mice that are attracted by the seed in the chicken coop in the back yard. They also play in the kiddie pool I fill with water every morning. Being a golden retriever mix, Cooper should be more attracted to the water, but Calli is the one who is always wet from laying in the pool.*

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- The paragraph, however, has no closure. It just "stops." A lead in and a final sentence are still needed:
- *Cooper keeps Calli active and fit with their constant play. They are truly bonded.*
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29 ☐ **Methods to develop your paragraph**

- Use examples and illustrations
- Cite data (facts, statistics, evidence, details, and others)
- Examine testimony (what other people say such as quotes and paraphrases)
- Use an anecdote or story
- Define the terms used in the paragraph
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- Compare and contrast
- Evaluate causes and reasons
- Examine effects and consequences
- Analyze the topic
- Describe the topic
- Offer a chronology of an event (time segments)
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31 ☐**When to start a new paragraph?**

- When you begin a new idea or point.
- New ideas should always start in new paragraphs.
- If you have an extended idea that spans multiple paragraphs, each new point within that idea should have its own paragraph.
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- To contrast information or ideas.
- Separate paragraphs can serve to contrast sides in a debate, different points in an argument, or any other difference.
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- When your readers need a pause. Breaks between paragraphs function as a short "break" for your readers—adding these in will help your writing be more readable.
- You would create a break if the paragraph becomes too long or the material is complex.

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- When you are ending your introduction or starting your conclusion.
- Your introductory and concluding material should always be in a new paragraph.
- Many introductions and conclusions have multiple paragraphs depending on their content, length, and the writer's purpose.
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Transitions and signposts

- Two very important elements of paragraphing are signposts and transitions.
- Signposts are internal aids to assist readers; they usually consist of several sentences or a paragraph outlining what the article has covered and where the article will be going.
- Signposts occur as sentences within an essay indicating to the reader how the essay is structured and how the ideas are arranged.

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- Transitions are usually one or several sentences that "transition" from one idea to the next.
- Transitions can be used at the end of most paragraphs to help the paragraphs flow one into the next.
- Transitional words form a link to the previous sentence; they include words such as: also, although, likewise, however, subsequently, therefore, rather, also, again, for example.

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5-step process to paragraph development

- Step 1. Decide on a controlling idea and create a topic sentence
- Step 2. Explain the controlling idea
- Step 3. Give an example (or multiple examples)
- Step 4. Explain the example(s)
- Step 5. Complete the paragraph's idea or transition into the next paragraph
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38 ☐ **Classroom Activity**

- Prepare a 1.5 page Personal Development Plan for the year 2024 based on SMART Goals
- SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely
 - Paragraph 1: Analysis of Personal Current Situation and Development Needs
 - Paragraph 2: Timeline of activities
 - Paragraph 3: Summing up