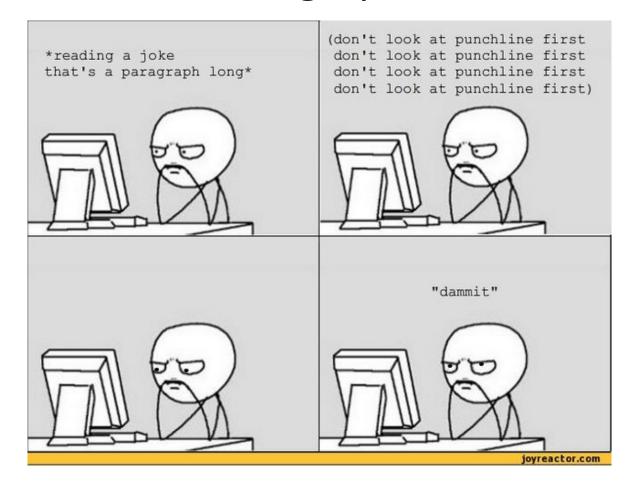
# Paragraphs



# Paragraph basics

- A paragraph introduces and treats a single idea (more or less)
- Marked by indentation and/or blank line between
- A good paragraph is:
  - unified (around a single idea)
  - coherent (all sentences work together to develop the idea)
  - distinct (differs in topic from sentences preceding and following)

# Paragraphs are unified

- All sentences in a paragraph contribute to building one idea
- That idea is announced by the *topic sentence(s)*
- Power positions: first (topic) and last (often key point or summary)

¶<sup>(1)</sup>Two main forces are at work as protostars accrete matter from clouds of dust and gas: gravity and radiation pressure. (2) The force of gravity drives accretion, and increases as more material is accreted. (3)Radiation pressure opposes accretion, and increases as gravitational collapse increases the protostar's temperature. (4) As accretion progresses, radiation pressure strengthens relative to gravity, and accretion should cease when the two forces balance. (5)Electromagnetic forces drive stellar winds. (6) The simplest models suggest that gravity-radiation equilibrium should occur before the protostar reaches about 10 solar masses. (7)The existence of larger stars, therefore, suggests that these models are incomplete. (8) Very massive stars are the source of elements heavier than iron in our universe.

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(6)The simplest models suggest that gravity-radiation equilibrium should
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of larger stars, therefore, suggests that these models are incomplete.

- Sentences work together to develop the paragraph's idea
- Coherence depends on paragraph organization and on relational devices
- Organization: signaled by topic sentence or standard/logical scheme
  - spatial or temporal
  - general to specific; or specific to general
  - least to most important
  - familiar to unfamiliar
  - simple to complex (e.g., rules then exceptions)
  - certain to uncertain

- Sentences work together to develop the paragraph's idea
- Coherence depends on *paragraph organization* and on *relational devices*
- Relational devices: show how sentences fit together
  - parallelism in construction or word choice ("First..." "Second..." "Third...")

¶We measured enzyme activity in presence of inhibitor with an in vitro assay. We first purified the enzyme in a sucrose gradient. We then added 0.1 μmol of purified enzyme to each well of a 96-well plate, and added 0.1 μmol of inhibitor to half the wells. We incubated the plates at 37° for 30 min, and then added 0.1 or 1 μmol of substrate to each well. Finally, we assayed enzyme activity spectrophotometrically.

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  - parallelism in construction or word choice ("First..." "Second..." "Third..."
  - repetition (how much is too much?)
  - transitional expressions: also, although, because, for example, hence, next, on the other hand, similarly...

No transitional expressions: "¶Lava from the 1998 eruption was richer in metals than that from the 1983 or 1977 ones. The 1998 lava was denser and less CO₂-rich.

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  - transitional expressions: also, although, because, for example, hence, next, on the other hand, similarly...

With transitional expressions: "¶Lava from the 1998 eruption was richer in metals than that from the 1983 or 1977 ones. The 1998 lava was, **furthermore**, denser and less CO₂-rich. **Despite these differences**, ejecta volumes were very similar. **As a result**, we cannot reject the hypothesis that eruptions are driven by periodic filling of a single magma chamber."

#### Paragraphs are distinct

- Each paragraph develops its own idea
- This makes paragraphs distinct but not independent
- Paragraphs work together in a section just like sentences in a paragraph
  - Same techniques: organization, relational devices
- Linkages between paragraphs often end up too strong. Common problems:
  - Superfluous paragraph breaks (no shift in topic)
  - Overstrong dependency (e.g, start with "Despite this...")
  - Redundant paragraphs (two paragraphs, same topic)

# Today's workshop

#### Paragraph markup

- Each group will be given a paragraph (or a few) to mark up.
- Identify the following elements:
  - (1) topic sentence(s)
  - (2) end-paragraph power position
  - (3) incidences of parallelism and repetition
  - (4) transitional expressions within the paragraph
  - (5) transitional expressions connect paragraphs
  - (6) if any, sentences or phrases that don't fit the declared topic
  - (7) if any, phrasing that creates overstrong dependency on material outside the paragraph.
- Identify the within-paragraph organizational scheme: temporal, spatial, general to specific, etc.
- Is the paragraph unified? Coherent? Distinct? Suggest a revision to improve one or more of these characteristics.