

LEARNING DEVELOPMENT

Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL)



Write with purpose: what do you want your paragraph to do?

Purpose

Paragraph Breakdown

ARGUE

A paragraph can be used to argue for or against a point of view. Each paragraph should focus on developing one main point for or against the position.

Topic Sentence -

introduce the argument and position for or against

Supporting Sentences -

develop the reasons for your position and presents facts and examples to support this; address any counter-arguments

Conclusion -

restate position

Useful transitional words and phrases

For giving reasons: first, second, third, another, next, last, finally, because, since, for

For counter-argument: but, however, of course, nevertheless, although, despite

For concluding: therefore, as a result, in conclusion, thus

CLASSIFY

This paragraph structure can be used to organise information, items, or ideas into categories. The organisation of information will depend on your purpose and subject area.

Topic Sentence -

Introduce the items being classified and/or the categories for classification

Supporting Sentences -

provide more information about the items, and how their characteristics fit into a particular category

Conclusion -

repeat what classification the item or category belongs to

Useful transitional words and phrases

Can be divided, can be classified, can be categorised
the first/second/third

COMPARE or CONTRAST

Use this paragraph structure if you need to examine similarities and differences. This paragraph structure is useful for literature reviews and reports.

Topic Sentence -

introduce the items to be compared or contrasted, noting similarity or difference

Supporting Sentences -

identify, describe, and discuss any similarities or differences

Conclusion -

summarise and interpret the similarities and differences discussed

Useful transitional words and phrases

For comparison: similar to, similarly, in the same way, like, equally, again, also, too

For contrast: in contrast, on the other hand, different from, whereas, while, unlike, but, although, however, conversely, yet, unlike

Learning Development
p: 4921 5350
e: ld@newcastle.edu.au
w: newcastle.edu.au/ctl-ld



Learning Development
CENTRE FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

DEFINE

Use this paragraph structure when you need to define a concept, and demonstrate an understanding of how it relates to a particular context or discipline.

Topic Sentence -

provide a simple definition of a concept

Supporting Sentences -

provide more information through description, explanation, and examples; makes links between the concept and how it applies to a particular context or field

Conclusion -

not necessary; can transition to the next paragraph if related to the concept

Useful transitional words and phrases

for example, for instance, an illustration of this, another example, firstly, the first step, secondly, the second step, finally, the final step

DESCRIBE

Use this paragraph structure if you are asked to provide information about something.

Topic Sentence -

introduce the item to be described

Supporting Sentences -

provide specific and detailed information about the item's characteristics and functions

Conclusion -

not necessary; can transition to the next paragraph if related to the item described

Useful transitional words and phrases

In the foreground, in the middle distance, in the background, in the far distance, next to, near, up, down, between, beneath, above, below, on top of, beneath, left/right, centre, front, back, middle, in the interior, on the exterior, on the inside, on the outside, surrounding

EXPLAIN

Use this paragraph structure if you need to explain how something works or the steps in a process.

Topic Sentence -

introduce what will be explained

Supporting Sentences -

explain each of the steps involved in the process, in the order that the steps are to be performed. Includes information about how something happens and why

Conclusion -

provide a brief summary of the process

Useful transitional words and phrases

At first, initially, the first step, while, at the same time, the second/third/next step, after, next, finally, eventually, the final/last step.

ILLUSTRATE

Use this paragraph structure when you need to clarify a particular idea by offering specific examples and showing how they relate to your main point.

Topic Sentence -

state a general idea

Supporting Sentences -

introduce examples to support the idea

Conclusion -

make a link between the examples and the general idea

Useful transitional words and phrases

For example, for instance, an illustration of this, another example