




Graduate Research Advanced Skills Program (GRASP)

Research Writing Series

Better paragraphs

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I acknowledge the Whadjuk Nyungar as the Custodians of the land on which I live and work. This Country was never ceded, it always was, and always will be Aboriginal land.

I pay my respects to Whadjuk Nyungar Elders past and present. I value their ancestral and continuing caring for Country practices and thank them for looking after this Country for so long.

I appreciate Indigenous ways of communication which are inclusive and respectful, and I recognise that this Country has been a place of teaching, research and learning for tens of thousands of years.

What is a paragraph?

- A piece of text that contains one main idea
...but that might be too simple (Rosenwasser & Stephen, 2009.)
- Formatting
- Each paragraph is part of something bigger
- Transition + one key idea + development of key idea

The M.E.A.L approach

...not a template, but a way to conceptualize a paragraph

The **M**ain Idea

Often an assertion that supports the larger claim

Evidence and **A**nalysis

Data needs to be explained. Evidence and analysis closely interlinked

Link back to the larger claim

...can be implicit

<https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/c.php?g=465757&p=5398055>

The M.E.A.L approach

“Electronic medical records promote patient satisfaction in their ease of access. Certain programs allow patients to view their medical records in a password-protected online environment, print out immunization records, and perform other necessary tasks with an immediacy that paper records do not allow (James, 2011). The convenience of immediacy spans also to healthcare professionals who may need to transfer records to other medical institutions for a patient's procedure. Rather than spending the time and money copying, faxing, or printing records, healthcare professionals can simply transfer information via the EMRs programs (Hunter, 2009). This ease of access for patients and medical personnel creates transparency.”

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Transitions between paragraphs

- Implicit transitions
 - ...help connect ideas
- Explicit transitions
 - ... show relation between ideas
 - Time: *then, next, after, while, since*
 - Cause-effect: *therefore, consequently, as a result*
 - Addition: *in addition, moreover, furthermore, similarly*
 - Contrast: *but, conversely, nevertheless, however*

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Deductive and inductive paragraphs

- Deductive paragraph
 - ...begins with the central claim, which is then elaborated and supported in the remainder of the paragraph.
- Inductive paragraph
 - ...begins with specific data, evidence or observations, which will support the conclusion/claim at the end of the paragraph.

Deductive paragraph example

Beneficial and harmful links exist between human health and ocean health. While several important medical treatments are based on chemicals discovered in marine animals, increasingly common phenomena such as harmful algal blooms have demonstrated their negative impact on human health. The health of marine ecosystems is affected by human activities such as pollution, global warming, and over fishing. But human health in turn depends on thriving ocean ecosystems.

Paragraph Development. 2018. Lingnan University.
<https://www.ln.edu.hk/eng/rhetoric/Paragraph%20Development/Paragraph07.html>.

Inductive paragraph example

Oceans have ingredients which can benefit human health. Several important medical treatments are based on chemicals discovered in marine animals. On the other hand, increasingly common phenomena such as harmful algal blooms have demonstrated their negative impact on human health. The health of marine ecosystems is affected by human activities such as pollution, global warming, and over fishing. But at the same time, human health depends on thriving ocean ecosystems. **We need a better understanding of the many ways marine organisms affect human health, both positively by providing drugs and bio-products, and negatively by causing human ailments.**

Paragraph Development. 2018. Lingnan University.
<https://www.ln.edu.hk/eng/rhetoric/Paragraph%20Development/Paragraph07.html>.

Maintain logical flow

“To understand human evolution, genomes from related primates are necessary. For example, identification of features common among primates or unique to humans will require several primate genomes. Fortunately, scientists can now do such genome-wide exploration; in the past 5 years, the community has released several nonhuman primate genome sequences.”

Subjects are all different

- *genomes from related primates*
- *identification of features*
- *scientists*
- *the community*

<https://cgi.duke.edu/web/sciwriting/index.php?action=lesson3>

Maintain logical flow

In a paragraph with one main topic, maintain logical flow by keeping a common grammatical subject throughout:

“To understand human evolution, genomes from related primates are necessary. For example, several primate genomes are needed to identify features common to primates or unique to humans. Fortunately, such genome-wide exploration is now a reality; in the past five years, genome sequences of several nonhuman primates have been released.”

Subjects all similar

- genomes from related primates
- primate genomes
- genome-wide exploration
- genome sequences

<https://cgi.duke.edu/web/sciwriting/index.php?action=lesson3>

A process for paragraph writing

- Step 1 Decide what the claim is in each paragraph
- Step 2 Organize the supporting evidence or data
- Step 3 Write the Topic Sentence
- Step 4 Write the paragraph
- Step 5 Revise the paragraph

<https://www.ln.edu.hk/eng/rhetoric/Paragraph%20Development/Paragraph07.html>

Reverse outlining

- Read the paragraphs in a section of your writing.
- Write down a paraphrase of each topic sentence.
- Read and evaluate the paraphrases.

Common problems with paragraphs

- Too much information
- Too many ideas
- Inappropriate placing of old and new information
- No logical flow in the string of grammatical subjects of sentences
- Poor linking between sentences, and between paragraphs
- Not referring back to main claim of paper, or section, chapter or thesis as a whole (signposting)

What you should do now...

GRASP webpage

<https://researchtoolkit.library.curtin.edu.au/grasp/about-grasp/>

Questions

LibraryResearchSupport@curtin.edu.au

Feedback

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1t7roPInys2xK_0zY69ivY9s09ZNs2iY_byLVdCSKD7M/edit?usp=sharing

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