How To Write A Effective Paragraphs

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Variety is the Spice of Life!

Different Schools... ....Different Rules

- Can you use ‘I’ in an academic text?
- Should an essay have section headings?
- How long is a report?
- Do you use primary or secondary research?
- Footnotes, endnotes or no notes?
- Harvard style referencing or MLA? What about APA?

Which school are you in? What is acceptable and what is unacceptable in your field?

Always check in your module handbooks or with your tutor if you are concerned about appropriacy.
How To Write Effective Paragraphs Aims

— To analyse the Introduction Paragraph(s) and Main Body Paragraphs

— To look at the structure and organisation of a paragraph

— To review cohesion, and discuss ways of creating a cohesive paragraph
What Should I Do?

What, in your opinion, is key to producing a successful assignment?

- Addressing the question
- Staying focused on the question
- Observing word limits
- Supporting your arguments and opinions
- Providing evidence
- Relating your thinking to that of other people
- Analysis vs. Description
- Writing clearly and concisely
- Referencing and citing correctly
It can be difficult to organise your ideas into one cohesive text – especially if the word limit is high. Essays that lack cohesion can seem confused, lacking in understanding or analysis. In the worst cases, essays that lack cohesion can be almost impossible to read.
Writing Style

Look at these pictures. Which one do you think best represents how an academic text should be written?
Writing In A Linear Style

Kaplan (1999) has written extensively on the subject of organisation in Academic writing. He suggests that academic writing in The UK favours a linear style:

The style of academic writing is linear - writing in a straight line:

- **Tell your audience what you are going to tell them**
- **Tell them**
- **Tell your audience what you have told them**

In this sense academic writing may seem repetitive – but remember this is what is expected of you.
Introductions - Thesis Statements

Thesis statements tell the reader what you will be arguing in your text. Thesis statements are given in the introduction, usually in the final sentence(s).

Thesis statements can help you to make sure you are answering the assignment question.

Thesis statements can help you plan your text.

Research is integral to a well written assignment. The AWL Open Workshop How To Read Journal Articles can help you get to the crux of critical reading!
Task

Here is one type of thesis statement. What do you think the essay will discuss?

— “The large movement of people from rural to urban cities has a major effect on cities.”

Thesis statements can be used to indicate the organisation that the essay will follow. This greatly aids cohesion. How do you think the essay will be organised?

— “The large movement of people from rural to urban areas has major effects on a city’s ability to provide housing, employment and adequate sanitation. This inadequacy may result in a rise in crime.”
Task

Thesis statements can be also be used to show your stance or criticality. What so you think this writer believes?

“The large movement of people from rural to urban areas has major effects on a city’s ability to provide housing, employment and adequate sanitation. This inadequacy may result in a rise in crime. This report will analyse these effects, arguing that greater government provision in terms of welfare is needed to avoid this outcome.”

Don’t forget, you can book a spot on the Critical Thinking AWL Open Workshop!
Be Specific

Thesis statements can help you and your reader clarify your critical viewpoint – but you must choose wisely. What is the difference between:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arguing</th>
<th>Explaining</th>
<th>Analysing</th>
<th>Comparing and contrasting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exploring</td>
<td>Evaluating</td>
<td>Investigating</td>
<td>Reviewing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observing</td>
<td>Justifying</td>
<td>Discussing</td>
<td>Reflecting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Main Body - Paragraphs

Paragraphs are very important in academic writing. Paragraphs help the reader to follow your arguments, and also show the reader when a new argument is being introduced.

How long should a paragraph be?

— There is no set length, rather you should understand that a paragraph is one argument. Therefore new argument = new paragraph.
The Inverse Triangle

This is what a paragraph should look like – but what do you think this tells us?
The Inverse Triangle

This is what a paragraph should look like – but what do you think this tells us?

- **Topic Sentence.** Tell the reader what the paragraph will say.
- **Supporting Information.** The main body of the paragraph. ALWAYS related to the topic sentence.
- **Conclusion.** Tell the reader what you have said.
Main Body Paragraphs

Paragraphs should usually be introduced with a topic sentence. A topic sentence tells the reader what the focus of the paragraph will be. What do you think these paragraphs will discuss?

— “The consequences of not moderating the intake of fast food are rather alarming.”

— “Given the rise of teenage pregnancies amongst poorer youths, Crispell’s (2007) views on wealth distribution are crucial.”

— “Modern interpretations of Kant’s philosophy differ in two important ways.”
Topic Sentences

Topic sentences have two elements:

1. The **topic**
2. The **controlling idea**

   “**Gold**, a precious metal, is prized for **two important characteristics**.”

This is the topic of the paragraph – ‘gold’.

This is the specific information about the topic.
Task

Which on of these do you think is the best topic sentence? Why?

English has been influenced by other languages

The slang expression ‘so long’ (meaning good-bye) is probably a corruption of the Arabic salaam.

The Arabic origin of many English words is not always obvious.

Too general

Too specific. This is a supporting sentence.

This is a good topic sentence
Good Writing - Cohesion

Each paragraph should work to develop your thesis statement, and should follow the theme of your argument.

Therefore the theme of one paragraph should follow logically from the theme of the last paragraph and should lead onto the theme of the next. Paragraphs have different functions, but all develop your thesis statement.
Good Writing - Cohesion

Linking words are very important in academic writing. They help to show the reader how arguments are related to each other, and they help create cohesion.

— How could you connect these clauses together?

— How does the relationship between the clauses change?

Mary missed the bus…

although…
and…
in addition…
conversely…
despite this…
on the other hand…
in contrast?..
accordingly..
still…
in spite of this…

…Bill caught the bus.
Good Writing - Cohesion

Look at how linking words are used to create cohesion within and between these paragraphs:

“One crucial difference between the world’s seas and oceans is that the salinity varies in different climate zones. For example, the Baltic Sea in northern Europe is only ¼ as saline as the Red Sea in the Middle East. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, in warm climate zones water evaporates rapidly and, secondly, the surrounding land is dry; consequently there is little freshwater to dilute the salty seawater.

These differences in salinity can cause serious problems with regards to farming and irrigation. In climates where fresh water is readily available, farming is usually successful (barring economic or natural disasters). However, in environments where access to freshwater is limited, irrigation, for example watering large crops, becomes almost impossible. This in turn can have serious, negative consequences.”
Task

In conclusion, your paragraphs and cohesion can be aided by utilising these writing tools. Do you remember what they are?

— Thesis Statement
  • to create cohesion across the whole text / with the assignment brief

— Topic Sentences
  • to create cohesion within paragraphs

— Linking words and phrases
  • to create cohesion within and between paragraphs
Where now?

— Need more detailed assistance? Book a tutorial!

— Want feedback on a specific section? Drop in to Getting Your Assignment Ready!

— Want somewhere quiet to write, and get on the spot assistance? Try The Writing Space!

— Got a few quick questions? AWL Office Hours at [The Study Hub] are for you!

— AWL Open Workshops can be booked here!
  
  * Suggestions:
    – Critical Thinking
    – How To Read Journal Articles
It's QUESTION TIME!!