

How to Write a Perfect Paragraph (Continued)

I. Topic Sentence

What is the topic sentence? The topic sentence is the first sentence in a paragraph.

What does it do? It introduces the main idea of the paragraph.

How do I write one? Summarize the main idea of your paragraph. Make clear what your paragraph will be about.

II. Supporting Details

What are supporting sentences? They come after the topic sentence, making up the body of a paragraph.

What do they do? They give details to develop and support the main idea of the paragraph.

How do I write them? You should give supporting facts, details, and examples.

III. Closing Sentence

What is the closing sentence? The closing sentence is the last sentence in a paragraph.

What does it do? It restates the main idea of your paragraph.

How do I write one? Restate the main idea of the paragraph using different words.

Example:

Canada is one of the best countries in the world to live in. First, Canada has an excellent health care system. All Canadians have access to medical services at a reasonable price. Second, Canada has a high standard of education. Students are taught by well-trained teachers and are encouraged to continue studying at university. Finally, Canada's cities are clean and efficiently managed. Canadian cities have many parks and lots of space for people to live. As a result, Canada is a desirable place to live.

Structure of the essay

Introduction
General statement Thesis statement Outline of main ideas you will discuss
Body of essay
Paragraph A
Topic sentence Supporting evidence Supporting evidence → theories, explanations, statistics...etc. Supporting evidence Concluding sentence (optional)

Paragraph B

Topic Sentence

Supporting evidence → theories, explanations, statistics...etc.
Supporting evidence →
Supporting evidence →

Concluding sentence (optional)

Paragraph C

Topic Sentence

Supporting evidence → theories, explanations, statistics...etc.
Supporting evidence →
Supporting evidence →

Concluding sentence (optional)

Conclusion

Summary of main points; final comment. (paraphrase what is in the introduction).

- Draw everything together
- Summarise the main themes
- State your general conclusions
- Make it clear why those conclusions are important or significant
- Do not introduce new material
- In the last sentence, sum up your argument very briefly, linking it to the title
- Set the issues in a broader perspective/wider context
- Discuss what you have failed to do – answers not clear, space limited
- Suggest further questions of your own

An Introduction to Academic Language

Academic English is aimed at emphasising **OBJECTIVITY** and avoiding ERROR. It is written using:

1. The third person;
2. Qualifiers to avoid generalisations;
3. A formal, academic vocabulary.

1. Use the 'third' person and avoid the 'first' and 'second' person:

First Person

I/me

we/us/our

Second Person

you/your

you/your

Third Person

he/she/it they

him/her/it them

his/her/its their

NOTE: Avoid using he, his or himself or she, her or herself when referring to people in general. Use **she/he or he/she**. Alternatively, rewrite the sentence in the plural – they, them, and themselves.

Using the third person minimises personal interest in the subject, and makes the writer appear objective.

2. Use qualifiers to avoid generalisations

Academic writing strives to be accurate by avoiding generalisations.

There are many qualifying words, which reduce a blanket statement to one which only applies in certain circumstances

Avoid the following words or expressions:	Replace with qualifiers:
Always Invariably Never It is always (the case that) It is never (the case that)	Mostly Mainly It seems to be (the case that) It appears to be (the case that)

Similarly, **avoid overly emotive words**, such as perfect, terrible, or amazing.

3. Use formal, academic vocabulary:

Academic writing uses:

- ✓ the technical vocabulary of the subject and
- ✓ a formal, academic vocabulary.

For example, the word “kids” is often used in informal writing; however it is more appropriate to use formal synonyms, such as “children” or “students”, in academic writing.

Instead of	Use
Says	argues, claims, maintains, asserts, contends, alleges, insists, suggests, points out, states...
Nowadays	In recent years, currently...
People who like	Those who agree with, supporters of, proponents of, those in favour of, advocates of, pro- (e.g. pro-slavery)...

People who dislike	Those who disagree with, opponents of, those opposed to, critics of, objectors to, anti- (e.g. anti-slavery)...
[The article] is about	[The article] discusses, outlines, analyses, explains...
Lots of	Many, several, numerous...
Find out, come up with	Explore, investigate, study, research, discover, determine, ascertain...
Get	Obtain, receive, achieve...
Doing	(be more specific) investigating, completing, responding, answering, solving...
He	He/she; he or she

Also, avoid contractions and abbreviations:

Instead of	Use
Don't	Do not
Can't	Can not
They're	They are
It's	It is
e.g.	For example