



# Body Paragraphs

## A-State Online Writing Center

### What is a body paragraph?

Paragraphs are the building blocks of papers and fulfill specific functions depending upon the purpose of the paragraph. While an introductory or concluding paragraph has a specific role and purpose within a paper, a body paragraph fulfills the function by supporting the main idea. The number of body paragraphs for a paper depends on the thesis and supporting evidence. There should be only one paragraph per main idea.

### What goes into a body paragraph?

A well-written paragraph possesses specific characteristics that work together to produce a paragraph that clearly specifies, describes, and supports the main idea. A paragraph is comprised of the following qualities:

- Supports the thesis: The sentences should relate back to the paper's thesis and defend a key idea.
- United to one idea: There should be a single controlling idea communicated in each paragraph. Typically, the key idea is introduced in the topic sentence of a paragraph.
- Logical: The paragraph should have a logical development of thought which supports the main idea.
- Well-developed: Each sentence in the paragraph builds upon the main idea drawing upon supportive evidence to prove the argument.

### How to organize a paragraph

In the introductory paragraph of a paper, the thesis statement should make an interesting observation or opinion about a topic that will be discussed in subsequent paragraphs. Each body paragraph will expand upon an idea presented in the thesis statement and defend the idea with analysis and cited evidence.

### Body paragraph requirements

1. Transition sentence to lead your readers from the previous paragraph
2. Topic sentence to tell your readers what the paragraph entails
3. Evidence to support your claims
4. Wrap up your information to explain to the reader why this information relates to your main point

## Sample paragraph

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.

*Source: California State University at Northridge*

## Focus on analysis vs. summary

All writing tasks in an educational program require a significant amount of thought and effort. Think about the ideas and problems you are considering for your paper. Talk with your classmates and those professionals you come in contact with about your ideas and listen to theirs carefully.

## Paragraph Content

Content depends on the type of paper being written.

- **Narrative:** Tell a story. Go chronologically.
- **Descriptive:** Provide specific details about what something looks, smells, tastes, sounds, or feels like. Organize spatially, in order of appearance, or by topic.
- **Process:** Explain how something works, step by step. Perhaps follow a sequence—first, second, third.
- **Illustration:** Give examples and explain how those examples prove your point.