

Paragraph summary

Purpose

Paragraphs are a group of sentences about a particular idea and are the building blocks of longer texts. The way you organise your paragraphs can help the reader understand your ideas or arguments.

Steps to writing an effective paragraph

1. Plan the point you want to discuss. What do you want to say and how will you support your point?
2. Use a clear structure which introduces and logically develops one idea at a time. For example, a common paragraph structure is TEEL/C.
3. Start with your topic sentence.
4. Develop the next few sentences by explaining, elaborating on, or providing evidence or examples to support your point.
5. End the paragraph either concluding the point or linking the point to the next paragraph.
6. Review your paragraph and the support. If you have used a citation to support your point, ensure it is formatted correctly.

Elements of a paragraph

Topic sentence	Introduces the specific topic for this paragraph or repeat the overall topic and write a controlling idea that introduces the specific aspect of the topic you will discuss
Explanation/Elaboration Example/Evidence	Develops your topic in a step by step way so that each sentence logically connects to the previous sentence. Supports the point with a range of strategies, including citations, examples, or logical reasoning.
Link/conclusion	Links to the next topic or concludes your discussion of this specific aspect of the topic

Example paragraph

Topic sentence	An understanding of the life-history traits of successful invaders can help in predicting potential future invasive species in a particular environment.
Explanation/Elaboration Example/Evidence	For example, some grass species such as <i>Pennisetum polystachion</i> (mission grass), have been found to be highly competitive at low soil nutrient concentrations (Pyers 2001; Douglas <i>et al.</i> 2004). This species has become an invasive weed in Australia (Douglas <i>et al.</i> 2004; Attiwill & Wilson 2006). Therefore, controlling known weedy grasses such as mission grass has been a focus in Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory where management strategies have been adopted to focus on preventing the invasion of other exotic grass species with similar traits (Kakadu BoM 2007).
Link/conclusion	This is because recognising life-history traits in already successful invaders can provide an early warning of the invasive potential of other species (Wittenburg & Cock 2001).

