

CASE Lecture 6: Paragraphs, introductions & conclusions

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Session Overview

- Recap of last week
- Quiz
- Introductions
- Topic sentences and body paragraphs
- Conclusions

The show so far!

- Last week: **paraphrasing, summarising** and **synthesising**, and why they are important in academic writing.
- Synthesising: 2nd EPAX video and exercises on LSBM web
- Paraphrasing, summarising and synthesising: primarily used in the body paragraphs of your writing. Why?
- Topic sentences vital for good paragraphing.
- Introductions and conclusions: different and quite formulaic.

Introductory Quiz

1. Which of the following statements is *not true* of paragraph construction?
 - A. One paragraph generally contains one main idea.
 - B. Paragraphs do not generally have a beginning, middle and end.
 - C. Paragraphs generally contain the main point and supporting evidence/examples.
 - D. Paragraphs should join together to build/support the main argument of the text.

2. Which of the following statements is *not a* feature of paragraphs?
 - A. A topic sentence.
 - B. A sequence of supporting sentences.
 - C. Coherence and unity.
 - D. A variety of writing styles.

3. Topic sentences (a sentence that defines the topic of the para.) can be found:
 - A. At the beginning of the paragraph.
 - B. In the middle of the paragraph.
 - C. At the end of the paragraph.
 - D. Anywhere in the paragraph, but generally at the beginning.

Introductory Quiz (cont.)

4. Which of the following is *not true* for the sentence(s) at the *end* of a paragraph?

- A. It/they may return to the idea of the topic sentence.
- B. It/they may make a link to the next paragraph.
- C. It/they may summarise the paragraph.
- D. It/they may introduce an interesting new example or evidence to support the main idea of the paragraph.

5. Which of the following *should not* be included in an introduction?

- A. A brief contextualisation/justification of the topic.
- B. A full overview of previous work on the topic.
- C. A thesis statement (your own viewpoint in one sentence).
- D. A brief description of the structure of the essay.

6. Which of the following *should not* be included in a conclusion?

- A. A reference to your thesis statement.
- B. A summary of the main body of the essay.
- C. A new and interesting example that supports your argument.
- D. A recommendation for action or further research based on the discussion in the essay.

Introductions

(Watch EPAX introductions video)

Good introductions contain several, if not all, of the following elements:

- General/background information
- An indication of the most widely accepted arguments, theories on the topic
- Supporting/further information
- Providing a definition of key/important terms
- Your viewpoint on the subject (**thesis statement**)
- Stating what you intend to do in the essay/paper/report.
- A summary of the points you are going to cover

Good introductions do not include rhetorical questions.

Introduction activities

(see worksheet)

Body paragraphs general points

- Justified or aligned left
- Separated by a single blank line
- No need to indent
- Full stop, space, capital letter!
- Single sentences are not paragraphs!
- Number of sentences in a paragraph depends on what is needed to adequately support the one main idea in each paragraph (3-5).
- Longer the essay, probably the longer the paragraphs
- Paragraphs build the essay by linking the ideas into an argument.

Paragraph construction

- Beginning, middle and end.
- Main idea expressed in single 'topic' sentence.
- Sentences at the end will often return to the idea in topic sentence to show how it has been developed and/or link it to next paragraph.
- Sentences in middle expand on main idea with evidence, reasons, examples.
- Ideas in each paragraph joined throughout by common thread

(Shields, 2010, p 134-135)

Paragraph structure

- Topic sentence
to introduce the main idea of that paragraph.
- Show evidence (quoted or paraphrased; referenced)
to support the main idea or argument in the topic sentence
- Comment on evidence (your own interpretation and critical thinking)
to show/illustrate how it supports or develops the main idea and back up with further evidence or examples
- Concluding sentence
to show the development of the argument
to link back to the idea of the topic sentence
to point forward to the main idea in the next paragraph

(Shields, 2010, p 137)

Paragraph structure: summary

- Topic sentence
- Evidence
- Comment
- Conclude

Topic sentences

- States the main idea of the paragraph so unifies the paragraph content
- It may tell the reader what to expect in the paragraph:
There are several factors that influence the behaviour of leaders.
- It may be a statement which is supported with evidence:
The survey results indicate that the HRM strategy is failing.
- It may be a statement of belief followed by an elaboration:
Servant leadership inspires loyalty and best performance.
- It cannot be a simple statement of fact:
Ryanair's HRM strategy was introduced in 2003.
- It cannot be a vague opinion or comment:
Ryanair's HRM strategy is very successful.
- When you have finished writing the paragraph, return to the topic sentence to check that it 'still works'.

(Beekman, 2011, pp 67-68)

[Refer to: QMU: Academic English Online – Paragraphing](#)

Conclusions

Good conclusions:

- Sum up the argument and how it was developed.
- Refer to the key words and show how these have been addressed.
- Confirm/refer to your thesis statement or argument.
- Make suggestions, recommendations or 'warnings' where relevant. This can be for further investigation/research.
- Do not include any new information in conclusions.

[\(Note again: QMU: Academic English Online – Conclusions\)](#)

Which of the following should/could a good conclusion do?

1. Summarise the main ideas which have been discussed
2. Introduce new ideas
3. Restate the thesis statement (being careful to use different words)
4. End with a long quotation
5. Make a final comment about the essay's main idea
6. Focus on one of the minor points discussed in the essay
7. Draw a logical conclusion based on the supported evidence you have used
8. Highlight limitations of research
9. Suggest areas for further research and study
10. Look forwards and speculate about future developments or trends.
11. End with a rhetorical question.

Conclusions activities

(see worksheet)

References

Beekman, L., Dube, C. and Underhill, J., (2011) *Academic Literacy*. Cape Town: Juta and Company Ltd.

Shields, M., (2010) *Essay Writing*. London: SAGE