

Body Paragraph:

Body Paragraphs

Although paragraph structure varies according to the conventions of form, here are common traits:

1. controlling ideas/topic sentences;
2. clear differentiation and transition between general and specific sentences, or between coordinate and subordinate ideas;
3. development rather than repetition of idea;
4. visual attractiveness to the eye;
5. relation to paragraphs which precede and follow.

Example Expository Paragraph:

National Public Radio offers listeners an alternative to commercial media. Participating stations throughout the country offer in-depth interviews with authors, radio shows from other countries, analytical features, talk radio, and debates. Journalists on shows such as the Canadian As It Happens or on the American All Things Considered illuminate issues through varied interviews, live phone calls to and from listeners, and excerpts from the most current published studies or books. Without sponsors to please, public radio broadcasters can approach controversial issues in a detailed and, above all, analytical way public radio has thus earned a reputation as a medium which presents ideas to its audience.

Controlling ideas/levels of generality/repetition:

Each paragraph should have its topic sentence. But, paragraphs shouldn't always be funnels, either, with one general statement followed by constant illustration (unless the paragraph will be followed by another, more general paragraph. ALTERNATE general with specific as you need to. Consider this paragraph for levels of generality and thus for relation between ideas.

National Public Radio has the reputation of fairness. It also promotes a sense of community and involvement in media. People who support this organization support non-profit news or new without a commercial motive. Without sponsors to please, journalists might be freer to explore controversial issues. Another component of many public radio programs is classical music. Many argue, however, that the focus upon classical music creates a split between "trash" and "elite" media. At any rate, NPR 's journalists certainly do encourage intellectual discussion and examination of controversial issues.

Relations/Transitions:

Words such as **ALTHOUGH, WHILE** suggest that one idea is subordinate to another. **THUS SO, HENCE, IN SUM** suggest that one idea dominates another, or caps it. **HOWEVER, BUT, STILL, THAN, UNLESS** suggest a qualification of ideas. **IN FACT IN ANY CASE, RATHER, EITHER** suggest an emphasis of ideas. **FIRST, THEN, NEXT, FINALLY** suggest an ordering of ideas. **THESE, THIS** suggest connection of ideas; **BECAUSE, SINCE** suggest causal relations.

Ways to Arrange Paragraphs:

1. VARY EXAMPLES:

An extended example makes use of details, description/ or anecdote. If you extend an example, then be sure to develop the idea more generally in the next paragraph.

An allusion is a brief suggestive reference to another text, a historical fact, a political event, etc.

A general example categorizes or classifies a series.

A specific example illustrates the series.

An analogy makes a comparison between examples.

A definition clarifies a term.

2. VARY SENTENCE PATTERN AND LENGTH:

Alternate sentence lengths. Vary short with longer sentences.

Recast your key nouns in different words.

3. PARAGRAPH SHAPE:

Don't let paragraphs go too long. Technical writers advise no longer than 10 sentences and usually not less than 6 or 7. A one-sentence paragraph is appropriate only in specific contexts, such as polemical writing. **Remember:** paragraphs function visually to rest the eye as much as the mind.

Transitions Into the Next Paragraph:

Many feminist historians of the 1980s follow Virginia Woolf's A Room of One's Own in their desire to rewrite British history from a female viewpoint. Women, they argue, have been present--they just haven't been accorded the same attention by historians and thus only seem to have been absent from history. From Queen Elizabeth to Mrs. Siddons, the first great stage actress, women have been involved in making history as nurses, mothers, capitalists, playwrights, farmers and even soldiers.

According to contemporary historians such as Emilia Blake and Linda Foster, Woolf's argument suggests

that history is not made because we make history ourselves. If half the human race has disappeared, it is not because that half has been absent, but rather than that half is absent from the history books. Recently, Dale Spender, the British linguist, feminist, and historian, has edited a series called *Mothers of the Novel*. Pandora Press sponsors the publication of 100 eighteenth-century novels written before or concurrently with the 'fathers of the novel'. The series offers reprints of books that have seemingly disappeared from discussions of our literary past.

The astonishing number of reprinted novels written by Mary Manley, Sarah Scott, or Maria Edgeworth suggests that a significant chapter of literary history has been forgotten.

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