

Writing a Paragraph

There are so many sources available to us when it comes to helping us write. I encourage you to just take time to think about what you are writing, write and then RE-READ everything. When you re-read, do it after you have taken a break from your writing. One of the best pieces of advice I can give you with regards to writing is to just write, make a habit of doing it and then walk away. Come back to your creation with fresh and new eyes. Also, it is imperative, and believe me I have learned this the hard way, to have someone edit your work. Give it to your mom, dad or sibling to peruse and critique.

Here is a great link from a literary source I have loved through the years. It is called Owl Purdue.<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/606/01/>

From their site we get a definition of a paragraph.

"A paragraph is a collection of related sentences dealing with a single topic. Learning to write good paragraphs will help you as a write stay on track during your drafting and revision stages. Good paragraphing also greatly assists your readers in following a piece of writing. You can have fantastic ideas, but if those ideas aren't presented in an organized fashion, you will lose your readers and fail to achieve your goals in writing." (Source <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/606/01/#resourcenav>)

When you think about your paragraph you can come to it in many ways.

- ❖ Think of it like a mini essay. It has a form: A beginning, middle and end.
 - The Beginning is your Topic Sentence.
 - The Middle is your supporting points.
 - The End is your transition sentence.
- ➔ Your **Topic Sentence** is the most important part of the paragraph. **Make it stand out. Make sure the reader knows what you are trying to say. Don't make them 'look' for the main point.**
- ➔ The **Middle**, supporting sentences, gives the details which develop the idea presented in the topic sentence.
- ➔ The **End**, your transition, moves into the next idea. You don't want to be abrupt in your writing, flow from one idea to another. This will begin the passage into the next idea with a smooth flow and uninterrupted thought. It is neat to see how that works when you really get that skill sharpened in your writing.

The key to this is that to learn how to do it you need to invest time in re-reading your work.

It is often hard to write and stop and be creative, add dress ups, focus on grammar, spelling, etc... while trying to compose the ideas in an understandable way. So, first write what you want to say, then go back and dress up your writing, correct grammar and punctuation and make it "flow". :)

One thing note...remember that when you change an idea or a subject is when you start a new paragraph.

- ❖ In an essay you have *the opening paragraph*(the introduction), *the developing paragraphs*(the body), and *closing paragraph*(the conclusion).
- Each paragraph has a purpose. Remember as you write that you are trying to communicate your ideas to someone else. That is important so you realize that you are not merely providing "entertainment" but a lesson in some aspect of life.

As an avid reader, I am drawn to books that are not only enjoyable but actually teach me something. Sometimes we read a book just because we want a good story and that is fine, but the story should have a purpose. We should be able to draw from the experience of reading. :0)

A few other things to remember:

Make sure you are on track. Don't take lots of stops and rabbit trails while writing. Keep your writing unified and focus on your topic sentence. If you are changing the topic, start a new paragraph.

Refer to the main thesis when you are writing your supporting paragraphs.

You should be able to see some structure to your sentence and the reader should be able to pick out the main idea and supporting points.

Use 1 main idea per paragraph.
3-7 sentences are good for length.

I have read it is good to have proportional paragraphs in relation to your paper. If you are writing a short paper, try to avoid the detailed complex ideas that need to be addressed in longer compositions. However, if you have too short of a paragraph you may not be missing some key elements.

5 Step Process of Paragraph development from The Writing Center at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. www.unc.edu/dpets/wcweb

1. Decide on the main idea or thesis, create a topic sentence-
This idea directs the flow of paragraph.
2. Explain the controlling idea.-
Interpret or explain what you want to say, sometimes people don't really "understand" what you want to say unless you tell them.
3. Give an example, or multiple examples.-
Provide evidence and/or support for your main idea. This shows relationship of ideas and represents the main idea presented.
4. Explain the example.-
Show the relevance of the example to the topic. Show why you are including the above examples.
5. Complete the paragraph.-
Tie it all together and transition into the next idea. You can remind the reader of the relevance of the information presented (very necessary in a conclusion paragraph)

Here is a list of paragraph types:

Narrative - tells a story

Descriptive - provides specific details

Process - explains how something works or a sequence/order of things

Classify - the paragraph is clearly in groups which explain different parts of the main topic.

Illustration - Using examples in your writing to validate the idea you are trying to communicate.

Make sure you follow your outline. It is really good practice to have an outline before you start writing. Even in creative compositions. It keeps you on track.