

PARAGRAPHING

FORM

Paragraphs are groups of sentences which typically express a common meaning.

Paragraphs are indented; that is, the first sentence is moved 5 or more spaces from the left side of the margin.

Note: If a paragraph is not indented, then we refer to the paragraph as being in block-style; we simply call these "blocks" instead of paragraphs.

Good paragraphs have adequate development. That is, a good paragraph has enough matter for a topic sentence, a good number of supporting sentences (at least, three additional sentences), and a concluding sentence. Short paragraphs are not necessarily good, since they seem, at best, underdeveloped.

WHAT DO GOOD PARAGRAPHS DO?

Good paragraphs adhere to their subject matter and do not deviate from it. That is, a paragraph focuses on one particular idea.

Paragraphs work towards supporting the matter of the topic sentence. So, they may do the following:

1. define terms, concepts, or other
2. give examples (discuss specific conditions)
3. illustrate ideas, contexts, or situations mentally
4. compare and contrast ideas, contexts, or situations ideas.
5. offer analogies and/or anecdotes (discuss similar conditions)
6. offer analysis
7. discuss cause and effect
8. discuss a process (present step by step instruction)
9. narrate (tell a short story or a part of a story)
10. summarize
11. describe or offer description
12. answer questions (providing insight into who, what, when, how, why, etc)

Good paragraphs generally stay in one verb tense (e.g. all in the present tense, all in the past tense, or all in the future tense).

Good paragraphs generally stay in one point of view (e.g. all in the first person - I, me -; all in the second person - you, we; or, all in the third person - he, she, it, they)

ORGANIZATION

Good paragraphs are organized, simply or complexly.

Simple Organization:

Topic Sentence
Supporting Sentence
Supporting Sentence
Supporting Sentence
Concluding Sentence

More Complex Organizations:

Problem and Solution
Introduction
Discussion of Problem
Transition from Problem to Solution
Discussion of Solution
Conclusion

Process
Introduction (with Topic Sent.)
Step 1
Step 2
Step 3
Step 4

Description
Introduction
Element 1
Element 2
Element 3
Conclusion

Analysis
Introduction
Characteristic 1
Characteristic 2
Characteristic 3
Conclusion

Analogy
Introduction
Similarity 1
Similarity 2
Similarity 3
Conclusion

Narration
Introduction
Event 1
Event 2
Event 3
Event 4