
WRITING A STRONG ACADEMIC PARAGRAPH

A paragraph is a sequence of sentences that support one central idea. It is a steppingstone on the way to writing a paper. A strong paragraph will help the paper achieve its purpose, but a weak paragraph will detract from the effectiveness of the essay.

ELEMENTS OF A STRONG ACADEMIC PARAGRAPHS:

A strong academic paragraph is generally at least four sentences long and contains the following elements:

- Topic Sentence
 - The topic sentence is an introductory sentence that indicates what the paragraph will be about
 - The topic sentence should ideally start off with a transitional word or phrase
 - The topic sentence should make a claim related to the overall point or thesis
- Supporting Sentences
 - The supporting sentences add details and sources/examples to back up the overall point being made in the paragraph
 - The supporting sentences should also explain what the example has to do with the point of the paragraph (mentioned in the topic sentence)
- Concluding Sentence
 - The concluding sentence brings the paragraph to a close
 - It should tie the topic of the paragraph back to the thesis statement and the topic of the paper

THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT STRONG ACADEMIC PARAGRAPHS:

- It should be **UNIFIED**: Every sentences should relate to the controlling idea of the topic sentence
- It should be **COHERENT**: The sentences should be organized in a logical flow and should follow a plan for developing and supporting the controlling idea
- It should be **WELL-DEVELOPED**: Every idea discussed in the paragraph should be sufficiently explained and supported through evidence and details that work together to explain the paragraph's controlling idea (Rosen and Behrens 119)

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Additional online resources can be found at www.madonna.edu/owl

Adapted from Rosen, Leonard and Laurence Behrens. *The Allyn and Bacon Handbook, Annotated Instructor's Edition*. 4th Ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000.