

WRITING THE PARAGRAPH

You have to be able to write strong paragraphs if you are to become proficient at writing. This is because paragraphs help your reader navigate the ideational landscape of a particular paper by clarifying the connections between your ideas/claims. Without strong introductory, body and concluding your paragraphs, your reader becomes lost and understanding is sacrificed.

I. PARAGRAPH TYPES

There are three types of paragraphs in each essay:

Introductory = Provides the context for your reader to understand your paper including the main issues addressed, text utilized and key terms you will use. Most importantly, you introduce your reader to what your paper will be about through your thesis statement which must be somewhere in your introductory paragraph.

Body = Develops the central ideas/claims presented within your thesis statement using evidence or examples.

Concluding = Sums up your main ideas/claims, emphasizes why they are important and then may pose questions to be explored or actions to be taken by future writers or researchers on this topic.

II. PARAGRAPH STRUCTURES

Introductory Paragraphs

A. **Context sentences** = provide general information about the main idea, explaining the situation so the reader can make sense of the topic and the claims you make and support (Brizee). Make sure to include:

- **Topic Importance** = Why you are exploring this topic and why should the reader care.
- **Texts** = Mention key works or theories you will utilize.
- **Key terms** = Generally define the key terms you will be using that are related to your topic.



B. **Thesis statement** = **arguable** statements that **limit and focus** a topic enough to make it manageable and touches on the **main claims** the writer is making in his/her body paragraphs in the order in which they appear.

Body paragraphs

- A. **Topic sentence** –A more detailed statement about a claim from your thesis statement that announces what your paragraph is going to be about.
- B. **Body** -Related particular sentences that support the statement you made in your topic sentence.
 - **Evidence or specific examples** should be used to support your statements, arguments or assertions. If you use a quote or other information, you should introduce your quote using a **signal phrase** and follow it up with a **sentence that explains the quote’s or information’s relation to your top sentence**.
 - **Transition words** should be used by the reader to understand the relationship between ideas/claims expressed within your paragraphs.
- C. **Conclusion/transition sentence**–A statement that signals to the reader what the next topic of discussion will be.

Conclusions

- A. **Summary** = Reminds reader of main ideas/claims discussed and new insights revealed succinctly and originally. Do not just copy and paste your thesis!
- B. **Importance** = Reemphasize why it was important to explore this topic.
- C. **Question for future/call to action**= You can either pose questions or expose neglected areas for future researchers to explore. If you propose a solution, tell your readers what they should do.

III. PARAGRAPH EXAMPLES

Introduction

Context { It is an indisputable fact that literacy is an essential part of our society, but frequently literacy is confined to an educational-based approach. For my literacy site, I chose to focus on the Intensive Care Unit of General Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri. The reason I chose such a heavily science-and-medicine related discourse is to show the extremes of its importance in specialized areas. Two types of literacy are essential to nurses: functional and social. When dealing with the actual matter of patients’ health, the barest amount of words is used to allow an efficient and quick way of operating, especially under pressure. This is functional literacy at work. The social aspect of literacy is necessary for the nurses to establish relationships with their patients and their families. The employees of the intensive care unit must be proficient in both of these aspects of discourse in order to properly assist their patients. }

Importance { }

Thesis { }

Key Term

Body

Topic Sentence

Nurses in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) also need to work on the discourses they have with each other. Since they interact constantly, one of the nurses interviewed described their work as a "team effort". There is a nurse director who oversees staffing and investigates day-to-day problems, but mostly the ICU is run democratically. While nurses are assigned to specific bed, they help each other when possible. For example, Diane says of the unit, "We share a certain camaraderie, but you do sometimes get the nurses that are lazy or don't know exactly what they're doing... that's when the other nurses will sometimes step in and help" (personal communication, February 3, 2011). The nurses who are incompetent usually have a deficiency in the discourses of the medical community. For there is a wealth of knowledge a worker in the ICU must be aware of including: an endless supply of medical terms and jargon; medicine and suggested treatments; phrases for status of patients; etc. Most jargon requires an understanding of the meaning of the words that goes beyond its usual meaning. The terms "dry or wet", indicate if a patient needs fluids (*dry*) or needs to get rid of them (*wet*). D51/2 is an IV containing dextrose) and a code status that indicates how a patient needs to be resuscitated; either through shock or CPR. To one outside of this discourse community, these terms make little sense, although nurses certainly have their own problems as a community. Sarah says they, "try to be optimistic about the people [they're] working with—obviously you get annoyed and frustrated, especially in such a stressful setting when new nurses don't know what you are talking about" (personal communication, February 10, 2011). Social literacy, however, takes a back step to the functional necessity of literacy.

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Conclusion/Transition Sentence

Conclusion

What does this mean for literacy as a whole? Functional literacy is clearly essential to the governing of a hospital unit. Employees need to understand:—written patient reports; flow charts; and the medical jargon used between nurses and physicians. Yet, Szwed poses a relevant question: "Even on questions of *functional* literacy, can we agree on what the necessary minimal functions are for everyday life?" (422). The answer to this question in this context here is unclear. Medical discourses contain scientific truths that cannot be changed. But the means of translating them to others are not always so simple, and thus, is often the most difficult task of a nurse. The social implications of literacy cannot ever be excluded, even in a life-or-death situation. In fact, as data suggests, the most effective method of nursing lies in mastering both the functional and social discourses. Nurses need to effectively communicate with other staff as well as with the patients they are trying to save and their families. The importance of mastering plural literacies is essential in the ICU. "There is no easy, one way to deal with your job," Diane says, after

Summary

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relating some of the difficult situations she has faced in the past few days alone. "I guess the best thing to say is this... Every day is different" (personal communication, February 3, 2011).

IV. BODY PARAGRAPH TEMPLATES

The following templates are to be used to guide you when writing the typical types of body paragraphs listed below. At the beginning of each template type, the **transition words** that are generally used within that type of paragraph and **the situations** in which the paragraph should be used are listed. You do not have to follow these templates exactly, **but you should use them to help you write properly structured paragraphs until you feel more comfortable doing so.**

A. Concept/Definition paragraph:

Transition Words Used: for example, furthermore, such as.

Used when you are writing about:

- What something is or looks like.
- How something is described or classified.

_____ is _____. For example, _____
 _____. Another example is _____
 _____. Furthermore, _____
 _____. It is also similar to _____ such as _____
 _____. Although, _____
 _____ is a _____.

B. Proposition/Support paragraph:

Transition Words Used: in conclusion, if, indicate, suggest.

Used when you are writing about:

- Why your reader should accept an opinion, hypothesis, theory, or argument.
- Your viewpoint in a review, article, persuasion, or appeal.
- How conclusions are based on research results or studies.

The _____ is _____ that _____. The _____ suggest _____. This can be seen when _____ states, " _____."
 This means _____. This also indicates that _____
 _____. This is emphasized when _____ points out that, " _____." In conclusion, _____

C. Contrast paragraph:

Transition Words Used: but, yet, however, on the other hand, on the contrary.

Used when you are writing about:

- How things are different.
- How things are negative.
- What choices or options are possible.

_____ and _____ are both _____ but they are totally different. In _____ you have _____. On the other hand, in _____ you have _____. _____ while _____ is _____. _____, however, _____. Yet, _____ is _____. All in all, _____ and _____ are _____ but _____.

D. Comparison paragraph:

Transition Words Used: similarly, likewise, in like manner.

Used when you are writing about:

- How things are the alike.
- How things are positive.
- what choices or options are possible

_____ is like _____ because _____. For example, _____ Similarly, _____ is _____ In addition, _____ is _____ Likewise, _____ is _____. This is especially true when you consider _____.

E. Problem/Solution paragraph:

Transition Words Used: for this reason, therefore, instead of.

Used when you are writing about:

- What is wrong and how it can be taken care of.
- What needs to be improved, changed, fixed, or remedied?
- Who is confronting problems in history.

_____ is a problem that has baffled many_____
_____. It is not because _____. For this reason, _____
_____ has _____ instead of _____
_____. Also, _____. It is important,
therefore, _____.

(Hacker & Sommers; Bullock, et al.)

Works Consulted & Further Reading

- Brizee, Alan. "Introductions, Body Paragraphs, and Conclusions for an Argument Paper." Purdue OWL, Purdue University, owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/owlprint/724/. Accessed 3 Apr. 2017.
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