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Paragraphs

According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2019), a **paragraph** is defined as ‘a short part of a text, consisting of at least one sentence and beginning on a new line. It usually deals with a single event, description or idea’.

Paragraphs are more important than you think. They give structure and break an assignment up into separate points so it is easier to read.

Before you begin writing your paragraph, it helps to have a clear idea of what the paragraph is going to be about. This is because a paragraph is essentially a collection of sentences that all relate to one main topic. Without a definite idea of what the main topic is, your paragraph will lack focus and unity.

**How Do I Write a Paragraph?**

Think of a paragraph as having a structure similar to an essay. Each paragraph should have an **introduction**, **main body** and **conclusion**:

Example:

**The benefits of social networking sites have the potential to outweigh the dangers of such sites. While social networking can reduce real-life interaction with one’s peers, it also provides a shy, introverted or socially awkward youth with a way of communication that makes it easier to connect and form relationships. Even though there are a large number of risks associated with social networking, when it is used correctly it offers considerable advantages.**

The **introduction** introduces the paragraph's main point. It is often known as the **topic sentence.**

The **main body** develops and supports the point. It should be **supported with evidence, examples and relevant quotations**, and an explanation of these and how they relate to the question

The **end** shows the significance of the point made and represents a pause in the flow of the writing. This pause is a signpost to the reader, indicating that the assignment is about to move on to a different stage.

**Remember!**

Each **new point** or **argument** made should be in a **NEW paragraph**

**Topic Sentences**

The first sentence of a new paragraph should be a **topic sentence**, which introduces the theme and subject of that paragraph to the reader.

Example:

**One of the main arguments against abortion is the idea that the unborn child has rights**. There are a variety of different opinions on the stage at which a foetus has the right to live. These range from conception, the first sign of brain activity or when the foetus could survive outside the womb. There is no agreed moment in medicine or philosophy of the point at which a foetus should have the same rights as an adult human being (BBC, 2018).

Introduces **topic** of an argument against abortion.

The rest of the paragraph then **expands** on the point made in the topic sentence.

**Signpost Words and Phrases**

You can use **signpost words** **and phrases** to begin each paragraph

These allow you to link ideas together and indicate to your reader which direction your reasoning is going to take.

Examples of **signpost words and phrases**:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Consequently** | **Firstly** | **Therefore** |
| **In addition** | **In conclusion** | **Conversely** |
| **Secondly** | **Finally** | **Furthermore** |
| **Hence** | **However** | **Despite this** |
| **Fundamentally** | **Thus** | **As a result** |
| **Subsequently** | **In contrast** | **Arguably** |

**Finally**!

When you think you have finished your work, check each paragraph only covers **one point** and there is no unnecessary repetition. The end of each paragraph should link the point made back in the question.