

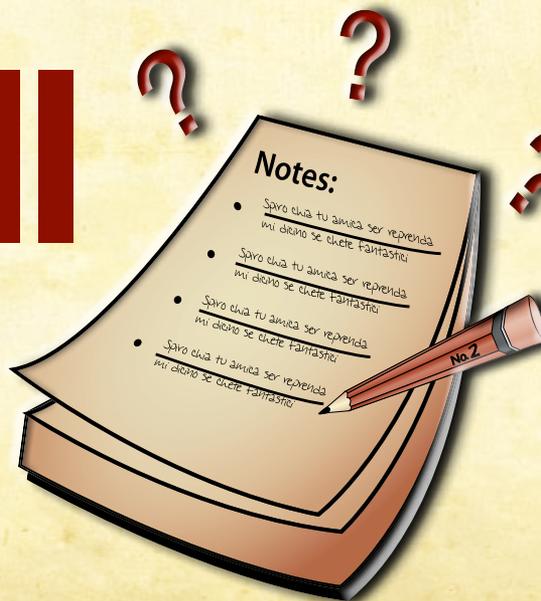
# The WRITING CENTER

## Elftmann Student Success Center

### A Guide On How To:

### Write a Paragraph

- What details should I use?
- What is the process?



# Writing the Paragraph

Paragraphs are the basic building block for skilled technical writers. In clear concise statements, technical writers give definitions, explain a process, or present arguments

## What is a paragraph?

A paragraph is a group of sentences that support a main idea. In technical writing, the format is usually a topic sentence with 3-6 supporting sentences. A paragraph is more than a number of sentences, of course. To be an *effective* paragraph, it should have:

- a solid **topic sentence** that presents the topic and expresses a perspective
- adequate **development** of the topic using specific details
- a **closing sentence** that summarizes your paragraph

## What specific details will match the purpose of my paragraph?

Paragraph Type	Example Details	Example
<b>Process/ How-To</b>	Steps Directions	Driving directions Assembly instructions
<b>Time Chronology</b>	Sequence of events Workflow process	Morning routine Development of a product
<b>Illustration</b>	Specific examples	Favorite foods Duties of an employee
<b>Classification</b>	Categories Common characteristics	Sections in a grocery store Organization of tools on design software
<b>Definition</b>	Unique features Personal definition of a concept	A vocabulary term Personal philosophy
<b>Description</b>	Vivid impression of subject Sensory Images	A favorite pet The noise of a troubled engine
<b>Comparison and Contrast</b>	Similarities Differences	Comparing two items to purchase How a technique has changed
<b>Cause and Effect</b>	Reasons for an event Consequences of an event	A car crash Troubleshooting problems

Paragraph Type	Example Details	Example
<b>Argument</b>	Advantages/Disadvantages Data	Reasons for a decision Advantages of one product over another
<b>Opinion Paragraph</b>	Viewpoint and Observations Rationale	Editorial in a newspaper Evaluation of a new product
<b>Narrative</b>	Short stories Personal Experience	Personal journal Biography or Autobiography

## What is the process of writing a paragraph?

Step	Example
<p><b>1. Read and note the details of your assignment.</b> Highlight clue words in your prompt, and pay special attention to the <b>paragraph pattern</b> (definition, process, argument, etc.) you're asked to use.</p>	<p><i>Explain the <b>advantages</b> of nuclear energy.</i></p> <p><i>Advantages = argument</i></p>
<p><b>2. Brainstorm</b> what you know about your topic.</p>	<p><i>Advantages of nuclear energy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>-good for the environment</i></li> <li><i>--available resources to make it</i></li> <li><i>-minimal waste</i></li> <li><i>-safer disposal</i></li> <li><i>-fewer emissions during creation</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Create a word outline</b> by choosing 2-3 related details to represent the key ideas you will present. Use the paragraph pattern table below to determine what kinds of details you will include in your writing.</p>	<p><i><b>All my ideas deal with the environment, and look like they are part of the process of making it.</b></i></p> <p><i><b>I. Environmental advantages of nuclear energy</b></i></p>
<p><b>4. Organize your list</b> by deciding the order in which you will present your ideas. This could be chronologically, or in order of importance.</p>	<p><i><b>A. available resources</b></i></p> <p><i><b>B. fewer emissions</b></i></p> <p><i><b>C. safer disposal, minimal waste</b></i></p>
<p><b>5. Write a topic sentence that introduces the subject of your paragraph.</b> In technical writing, writers often begin with a question and the supporting sentences answer the question.</p>	<p><i>I. There are significant environmental advantages to nuclear energy.</i></p>

Step	Example
<p><b>6. Create one sentence for each idea in your word outline.</b> Try to tie each statement back to your topic sentence; this will also help your paragraph stay on target.</p>	<p><i>A. To start the process, there is a readily available amount of uranium on earth.</i></p> <p><i>B. Nuclear power plants emit significantly fewer emissions during the creation of nuclear energy.</i></p> <p><i>C. Once the energy is made and sold, the minimal waste is safely disposed of.</i></p>
<p><b>7. Write a closing sentence that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summarizes the ideas presented</li> <li>• Restates the main idea presented in the topic sentence in a different way</li> <li>• Asks the reader a question</li> <li>• Gives an opinion or conclusion</li> </ul>	<p><i>D. These environmental advantages are reasons enough to increase the amount of nuclear energy used in the United States.</i></p>
<p><b>8. Revise your sentences,</b> and decide how well they stay focused, if there's enough detail to believe your topic sentence, and how easy your paragraph is to read.</p>	<p><i>Read your paragraph out loud to listen for natural pauses, chopiness, or if you run out of breath.</i></p>
<p><b>9. Edit your paragraph</b> for punctuation and capitalization errors.</p>	<p><i>Read your paragraph backwards and read for each type of error separately</i></p>

## References

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