

Paragraph Structure

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How can we better shape our Paragraphs?

- Topic sentences
- Paragraph Flow
- Transitions and connections

Begin your paragraph with your topic sentence

The topic of the paragraph:

- grounds the reader
- announces the focus of the paragraph
- is usually a noun of some kind

The rest of the paragraph characterizes,
explains, comments on, the topic

Why Do We Need Topic Sentences?

1. Private higher education is seriously concerned about population trends through the end of the century.

As readers, we assume that the rest of the paragraph will:

- comment on,
- criticize, or
- explain this position.

Topic Sentences (cont.)

Private higher education is seriously concerned about population trends through the end of the century. Educational thinking has changed throughout the decades. In fact, many scholars question whether private education is worth its price tag.

Too Many Topics

Private higher education is seriously concerned about population trends through the end of the century. *Educational thinking* has changed throughout the decades. *Is private education worth its price* tag, many scholars want to know.

Paragraphs have structure

- Decide and announce a clear topic.
- Refer or connect to that topic through the rest of the paragraph.
- Information placed at the beginning of a sentence announce that :
 - The sentence connects to its topic
 - The sentence connects to the previous sentence
 - The sentence will offer a new idea or example to further understanding of the topic

What is Paragraph Flow

Private higher education is seriously concerned about population trends through the end of the century. *Population trends* will signal to these institutions the rate of growth that they can expect in the next 10 to 20 years. For example, *if the rate of growth* expands by 10%, these institutions can expect about a 5% increase in the number of students attending college. *If the number of students increases*, this growth will affect capital costs, faculty additions, among other expenses.

Paragraph Flow out of control

Private higher education is seriously concerned about population trends through the end of the century. *Population trends* can tell a business owner what markets to look at when designing new products and services. *New products and services* are part of the global market place but can have severe implications on the countries that manufacture them. *Manufacturing* has been the path towards greater wealth for many developing nations but the question is whether these global firms are good for the environment.

What are Transitions

- Adding: furthermore, moreover, similarly, and, also
- Opposing: but, however, though, nevertheless, on the other hand
- Concluding: so, therefore, for, as a result, consequently
- Intensifying: in fact, indeed, even, as a matter of fact
- Sequencing: first of all, second, next, finally...

How can we best use Transitions?

- Be careful not to tack on ideas

Metaphor is one of the most difficult figures of speech for an inexperienced writer to master. *Also*, irony can be a problem.

Metaphor is one of the most difficult figures of speech for an inexperienced writer to master. *Also*, it requires a mature imagination and a sense of appropriateness.

Because would be more precise:

... an inexperienced writer to master because it requires a mature imagination and a sense of appropriateness.

Effective Use of Transitions

- When you contradict:

I love you, *but*

do so early on.

- Avoid using a series of contradictory transitions so that you don't confuse the reader:

I love you, but I am not sure about our future. However, we could focus on the fact that I am not single, but that would be futile because we already have discussed this complication.

How can we best use transitions?

- Use logical connectors such as *therefore*, *hence*, *thus* and *then* sparingly.
- Place transitions towards the beginning of sentences where they can be most helpful.

She had tenure, she had variety of job prospects.
Her bid to be head of the department was not
successful, *however*.

Can you write concisely?

According to good quality control practices in manufacturing any product, it is important that every component part that is constituent of the product be examined and checked individually after being received from its supplier or other source but before the final, finished product is assembled (45 words)

Concision

- Good quality-control requires that every component be checked individually before the final product is assembled (16 words)

Concison

- Over the most recent monthly period, there has been a large increase in the number of complaints that customers have made about service that has been slow. (27 words)

Concison

- Last Month, many more customers complained about slow service (10 words)

Voice

- *Supportive Voice* – Let's meet tomorrow to see if we can figure out why people in your department had difficulty meeting last month's production targets.
- *Domineering Voice* – I have scheduled an hour for us to meet tomorrow to discuss the failure of your department to meet production targets last month

Can you simplify your sentences?

- A new factory that produces chemicals for the OPAS system, which enables large manufacturers of business forms to make carbonless copy paper as part of their own manufacturing process, began to operate last year.

When should you combine sentences?

- Water quality in Hawk River declined in March. This decline occurred because of the heavy rainfall that month. All the extra water overloaded Tomlin County's water treatment plant.
- Water quality in Hawk River declined in March because heavy rainfalls overloaded Tomlin County's water treatment

Emphasize a point by putting it at the end of the sentence

- Although our productivity was down, our profits went up.
- Although our profits were up, our productivity was down.