

Writing Effective Paragraphs

An effective persuasive essay usually begins with an introductory paragraph that gets readers interested in the issue, includes three or more body paragraphs that make an argument, and ends with a concluding paragraph that summarizes the argument.

Effective paragraphs are the building blocks of a well-crafted essay. A paragraph is a group of sentences focusing on a main point. The sentences present information that supports the main point. A paragraph begins on a new line and ends with a return to a new line to separate its main idea from other main ideas in the essay.

Effective paragraphs usually have at least two common characteristics:

- **State the main point of the paragraph clearly.** The main point that will be developed should be clearly stated in a sentence, often called the *topic sentence*. The first sentence of a paragraph is often the topic sentence.
- **Present supporting points in a logical order.** The supporting points should be presented in an order that leads readers to the main point. You should present enough information to convince readers of each supporting point. You may want to include some specific facts, data, or quotes. The paragraph's main point should be the logical conclusion readers reach at the end of the sequence of supporting points.

Introductory Paragraph

The *introductory paragraph* should engage your audience in the issue and prepare them for the argument you are going to make in the essay. Many persuasive essays have one introductory paragraph, but this is just a guideline. Most introductory paragraphs typically include about three to five sentences, but again, this is just a guideline.

Effective introductory paragraphs usually:

- Tell the reader what the essay is about
- Engage the reader in the issue
- Tell the reader what the reader will get from the essay

Body Paragraphs

The *body* is the main content of any essay. In a persuasive essay, the body paragraphs must provide enough information to make a convincing argument for the position. Most persuasive essays have three to five body paragraphs.

Effective body paragraphs usually:

- Explain one main point
- Provide information to support the main point
- Present main points in a logical order
- Follow your outline to structure your essay
- Connect main points with smooth transitions
- Balance the structure of the essay

Concluding Paragraph

Many persuasive essays have one *concluding paragraph*, but this is just a guideline. In rare cases, a persuasive essay may not even require a concluding paragraph. Most concluding paragraphs typically include about three to five sentences, but again, this is just a guideline.

Effective concluding paragraphs usually:

- Remind the reader what the essay has explained
- Offer the reader a new viewpoint or insight
- Make a lasting impression on the reader