

UTS:

**HELPS**

HIGHER EDUCATION LANGUAGE AND PRESENTATION SUPPORT

# Writing Effective Paragraphs

## Discuss

- What is paragraph?
- Why are paragraphs important in writing?
- What does a good academic paragraph consist of ?

## What is a paragraph ?

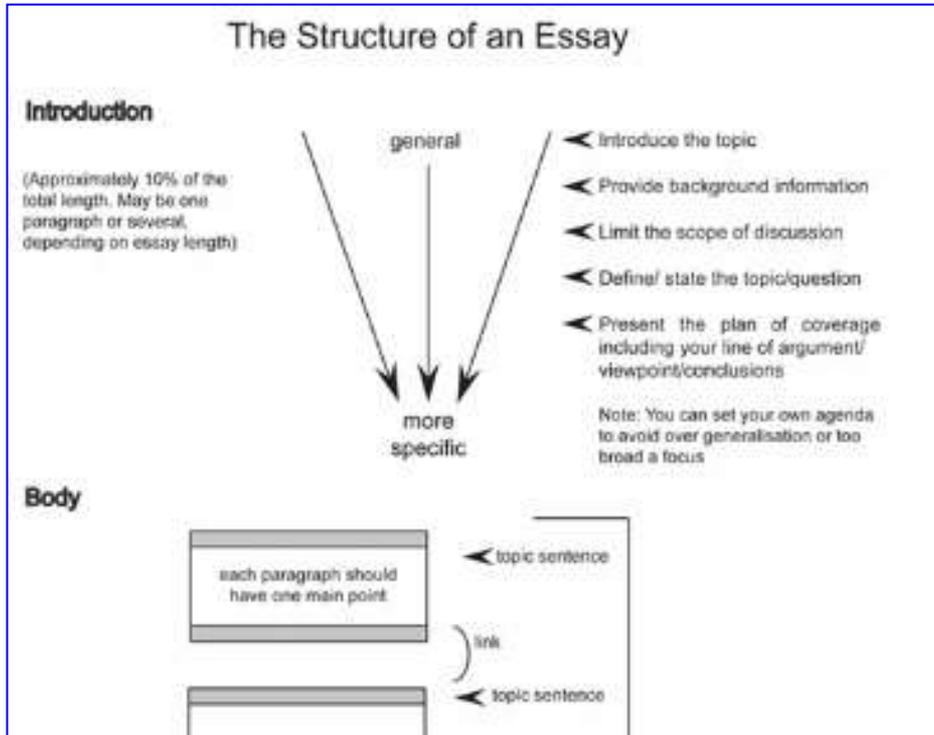
“In its simplest and most basic form, a paragraph is a group of sentences about one topic. Paragraphs are the fundamental building blocks of texts. Their purpose is to inform, give an opinion, state facts or explain. An effective paragraph is logical and well structured and clear ”(Courtald, 2008).

## Why are paragraphs important ?

See <http://maryannintensivewriting2013.weebly.com/index.html>

- Writing
- Paragraphs

# Essay Structure



# What should an effective paragraph consist of?

## Structure

- topic **sentence**, explanation of ideas, support to theories, elaboration or comment on ideas, a concluding sentence ( at times)

## Unity and coherence

- how ideas link together, transition and linking words

## Cohesion

- reference back to topic and to previous paragraphs

## Paragraph Structure

Writing an assignment for academic purposes may be a difficult process for the beginning writer. As well as understanding how to interpret what is required in the assignment, the student needs to have efficient and planning strategies. It also helps to realise that it is very useful to write several drafts, rather than attempting to write the final version in one step. Another important strategy is managing time, so that there is sufficient time for reflection and getting feedback. In this way the final version will have advanced from the initial ideas to an edited and more polished version. Understanding how to manage the parts of the process is therefore an important part of assignment writing.

## Where do you get ideas for paragraphs?

From brainstorming:

- Key words/phrases can become main ideas □ paragraphs

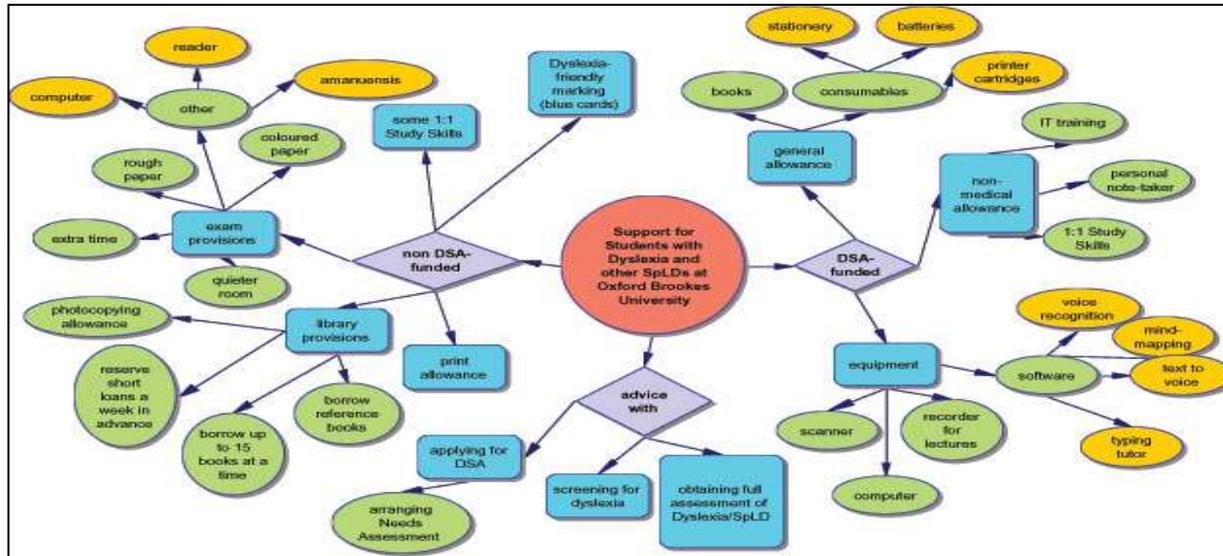
From question:

- Key words/phrases can become main ideas □ paragraphs

From reading/notetaking:

- Key words/phrases can become main ideas □ paragraphs

## Example Bubble / Ideas Plan



**Topic-** International students in Australia face communication problems with Australians

### Paragraph outline

- |    |  |                   |
|----|--|-------------------|
| A. | Australians are difficult to understand. | SUPPORTING POINT  |
|    | 1. incomplete sentences                  | Supporting Detail |
|    | 2. unclear expressions                   | Supporting Detail |
|    | 3. talk too fast                         | Supporting Detail |
|    | 4. slang and idiom                       | Supporting Detail |
| B. | Intl' Studts. have poor verbal skills.   | SUPPORTING POINT  |
|    | 1. lack vocab                            | Supporting Detail |
|    | 2. poor pronunciation                    | Supporting Detail |

# Purpose of Paragraphs

## On the topic of sharks

- to **explain** under what circumstances sharks eat people
- to **compare and contrast** sharks; man-eating Vs. other sharks
- to **suggest** how endangered shark species can be protected
- to **compare different theories** on why sharks eat people
- to **introduce the essay** on sharks
- to **conclude the essay** on sharks

## Introduction Definition

In the context of a university, **an essay** is a written argument that is supported by evidence. The evidence is derived from a range of sources, and integrated according to a prescribed convention of referencing. Essays are divided into paragraphs (an introductory paragraph, body paragraphs and a concluding paragraph) and include a list of references on a separate page. Unlike a report, an essay does not use subheadings. The purpose of an essay is to present a position on a subject and develop it via a carefully staged argument, through reasoning and judicious selection of source material. It is mostly students who write essays, to display their subject knowledge and proficiency in academic writing.

## Types of Paragraphs: Argument

The idea that **nuclear energy is a perfectly clean alternative** to coal is false, because the inevitable waste of nuclear reactors can have devastating, long lasting consequences for society and the environment. For example, the chronic health complaints caused by the explosion of the nuclear reactor in Chernobyl persist today, despite the fact that this catastrophe occurred over 20 years ago. Notwithstanding major reactor malfunctions, nuclear energy has other substantial drawbacks. As Stoett (cited in Gonzalez 2005) points out, “the production of nuclear energy and the disposal of nuclear wastes both have significant environmental costs, which in the longterm could be just as environmentally degrading as climate change.”

## Types of Paragraphs : Problem /Solution

The **expansion of cities in China**, such as Shanghai, is leading to considerable loss of agricultural land. This could result in serious problems, such as food shortage because much of the land being used by urban development is fertile farmland. Apart from this, China is developing an automobile industry, which worsen existing environmental and social problems. Instead of this, the Chinese government should support the development of a transport system that is regulated, and relies more on public transport.

## Types of Paragraphs: Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that while **high-intensity exercise** is the most efficient means of achieving peak physical condition for events such as triathlons, it is inappropriate for people aged 45 and over, or with certain conditions or injuries. Low-intensity exercise has longer lasting benefits on physical and psychological health, and presents a lower risk of injury. Teachers of physical education should therefore consider designing exercise programs that combine low and medium intensity to build strength and injury resistance. Doing this would guarantee 'controlled preparation' and a foundation which athletes could build on leading to performance without risk of injury.

## HELPS support includes :-

- Weekly workshops 1.5 hours
- Drop-in consultations 15' mins
  
- Write Now 1- 4 pm (M-Th. - HELPS Office)  
1-5 pm (Fri. - Library)
- Conversations@UTS 2 hrs (M- F)
- Intensive Academic English programs Holiday Periods
- Match with a Volunteer HELPS website