

How to Write Body Paragraphs

This resource provides general strategies for writing body paragraphs for argumentative essays and short (five- to ten-page) research papers. To learn more about writing body paragraphs for subject-specific assignments like case study reports and journalistic writing, visit the [Subject-Specific Resources Page](#) at Purdue Online Writing Lab.

Each of your body paragraphs must introduce and develop a reason that justifies your thesis or overall view. For each body paragraph, you must first clearly state the reason in a topic sentence. Next, you must provide relevant and specific evidence to support this reason. Then you must explain how that evidence supports your reason. Finally, you must show how this reason relates back to your thesis or overall view.

Preparation for Writing a Body Paragraph

Before you begin writing body paragraphs for your paper, you should already have formulated a tentative thesis or view. You should also have done some preliminary research on your topic and taken notes on any sources you have found so far.



Procedures for Writing a Body Paragraph

1. Read over your tentative thesis, source material, and notes.
2. Write down several reasons to support your thesis or view. (“One reason I’ve taken this view is that....” “Another reason is that...”)
3. Read over your list of reasons. Then choose one reason to write your paragraph about.
4. State this reason in a complete sentence.
5. Read over your source material and notes. Pick one piece of evidence that is relevant to and supports your reason.
6. Write down that piece of evidence after your topic sentence, remembering to properly introduce and document it. (For more information on research documentation and source integration and documentation, please refer to the [Research and Citation Resources page](#) at Purdue Online Writing Lab.)
7. Write a brief explanation of how this evidence illustrates or supports your reason. You might start with a phrase like “What this illustrates is...” or “This information suggests that...”
8. If possible, repeat steps 5-7 with another piece of evidence from a different source. Provide a transitional word or phrase to show how the first piece of evidence is linked to the second, such as “Like Author A, Author B argues that...” or “Unlike Author A, Author B insists that...”

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9. Finish the paragraph with a final sentence that reiterates your reason and its significance to your thesis.

And you have done it! You have written a focused, developed body paragraph for your paper.

To see how this process can be used to create an effective body paragraph, please refer to the sample body paragraph below.

Sample Body Paragraph

This sample body paragraph is from peer tutor Hannah Brooks's argumentative essay "Hope for the Hippies," which she completed for ENGL 103: Writing for a Discipline. Her paper's thesis is that "consuming oil is an inefficient and dangerous way to energize our world." This statement summarizes Hannah's overall view on energy consumption. Then, for her body paragraphs, Hannah presents and develops reasons to support this view. One reason Hannah believes oil is an inefficient energy source is that less dangerous and less costly sources of renewable energy already exist and should be utilized more extensively. Hannah then explains the logic behind this reason and supports her reason with evidence from at least one outside source.

Newer energy sources should be explored and fully developed before we reach the point of complete oil exhaustion. We already have wind and water resources at our disposal. Look around you; in the hills surrounding our own Saint Francis University you can see the blades of windmills ceaselessly turning against the horizon. Scientists have even developed hydrogen cars that produce a single waste product: pure water. What a wonderful discovery! There are a few drawbacks that currently hinder the hydrogen car from going full-market. An online report put out by the United States Department of Energy titled "Hydrogen" explains both the drawbacks and advantages of hydrogen-powered vehicles. Relative to the disadvantages, it is expensive to produce and is only available in select locations, namely California. This in turn drives up the cost of a typical hydrogen powered vehicle, so not many consumers are able to afford this environmentally friendly vehicle. Also, hydrogen fuel contains much less energy per volume than gasoline, making hydrogen-fueled cars unable to travel as far as gasoline-powered cars on the same size tank of gas. However, the benefits greatly outweigh the disadvantages. Hydrogen fuel can be produced domestically, which eliminates our dependence on foreign oil

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producers. Today, hydrogen fuel is still in its developmental phase, but it is at least a start towards solving this problem and surviving the energy crisis.