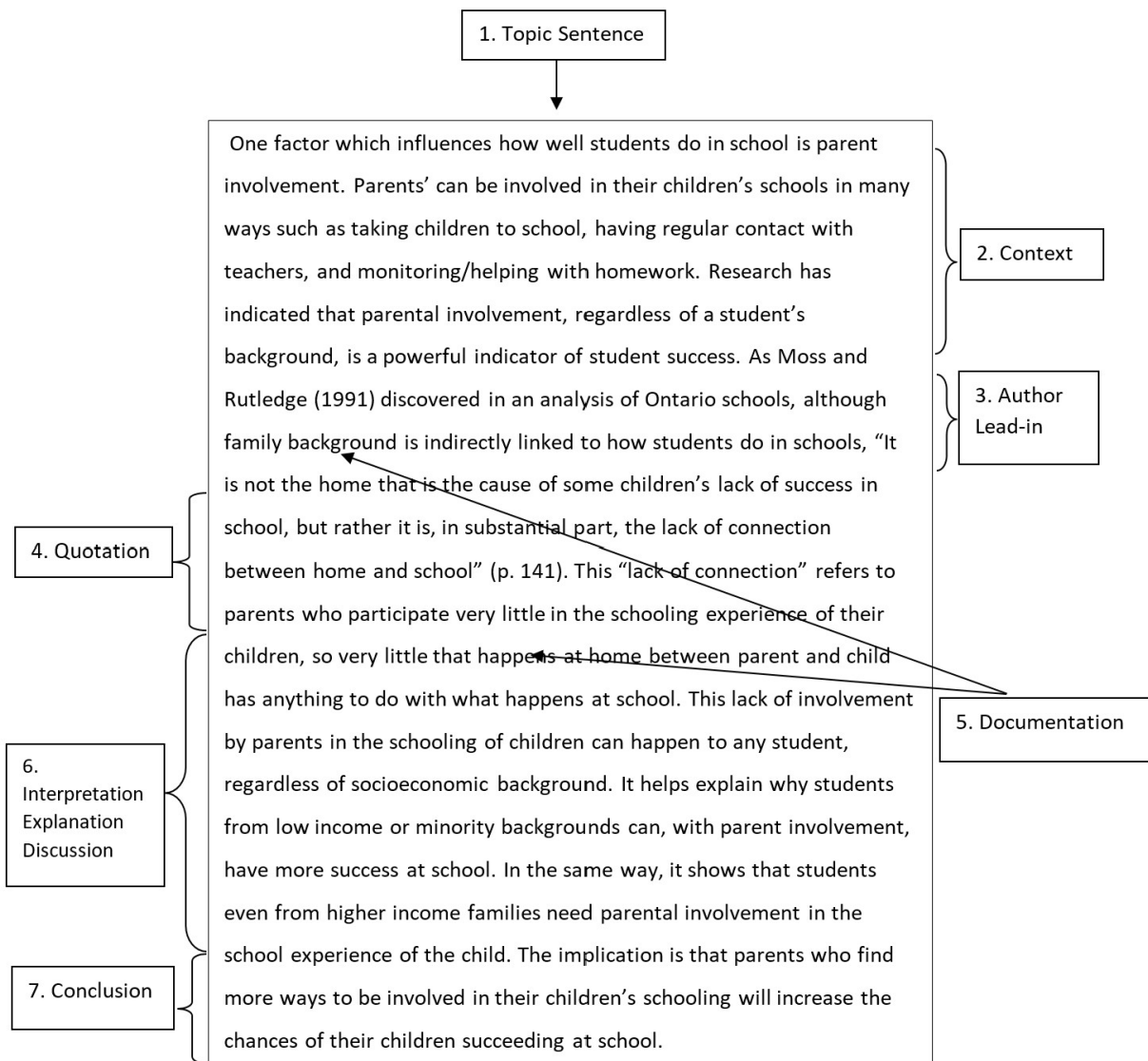


## Building Paragraphs around Quotations and Outside Information

When writing academic paragraphs, writers need to support or bring in outside information or evidence to back up the main points being made. One kind of support used frequently in academic papers is the quotation. This resource shows you the seven steps needed to build a paragraph around a quotation.

A quotation usually needs to appear somewhere in the middle of a paragraph, sandwiched between an introduction and an explanation. Look at the following example.



### 1. Make Your Point (Topic Sentence)

Make a main point briefly.

“One factor which influences how well students do in school is parent involvement.”

The purpose is to tell the reader what you will show in the paragraph. It prepares the reader for what is coming. You should not do any of the work of explaining or of giving evidence or reporting information in the first sentence of a paragraph. For this reason, the first sentence of the paragraph should be brief.

## 2. Explain the Context

Provide a context or further explanation for your point.

“Parents’ can be involved in their children’s schools in many ways such as taking children to school, having regular contact with teachers, and monitoring/helping with homework. Research indicates that parental involvement, regardless of a student’s background, is a powerful indicator of student success.”

The sentences after the topic sentence should be used to help the reader understand more about your point, or to prepare the reader for the evidence (the quotation). This sentence can be used to:

give background information

explain the significance of your point

define or highlight the meaning of your point

## 3. Provide an Author Lead-in

Introduce the author of the quotation. If it is your first time quoting or mentioning this author, give context to who they are to build ethos (are they researchers or professors specialized in a certain field?)

“As Moss and Rutledge (1991) pointed out in an analysis of Ontario schools ...”

Remember to give a phrase or sentence that signals the authorship of the quotation.

The author reported “...”

Smith claimed “...”

The article reported “...”

Jones and Lee suggested “...”

## 4. Insert the Quotation

Use only enough of the quotation to make your point.

“. . . although family background is indirectly linked to how students do in schools, “It is not the home that is the cause of some children’s lack of success in school, but rather it is, in substantial part, the lack of connection between home and school” (pp.141).

Quotations need to quickly and clearly support your point:

The reader should not be forced to read through long quotations, wondering what part of the quotation is relevant.

Providing needed context and explanation is your job as writer. Do not expect your quotation to provide the context and explanation for you.

## 5. Document the Source

Document the quotation using in-text citation.

“The differences in parental treatment between genders, birth order, and sibling configuration is not strictly biological, but instead a combination of biological, psychosocial, and environmental influences (Kamran, 2016).”

This means providing author and page number either in brackets after the information or in a footnote at the bottom of the page. The example above uses the APA style of documenting because it also includes the publication after the author. Different departments at the college require different approaches to documenting, and you need to find out which format is required by your instructor. The most popular formats are APA, MLA, and Chicago style. The Library and the Learning Center both have handouts and manuals on how to use each of these styles of documenting. Always check the [Purdue OWL](#) website to ensure you are formatting the citation correctly.

## 6. Interpret, Explain, Discuss

Explain how the quotation shows the point that you made in your first sentence of the paragraph.

Students often think that the quotation speaks for itself. However, you want your reader to interpret the quote the same way you intend by stating the relationship between the evidence (the quotation) and the point you are making in the paragraph.

## 7. Finish with a Conclusion

Finish the discussion of the quotation with strong, energetic wording that connects back to your topic sentence and thesis statement and signals a finish to the paragraph.

“The implication is that parents who find more ways to be involved in their children’s schooling will increase the chances of their children succeeding at school.”