

Parts of a Paragraph

Generally, essay paragraphs discuss one idea in detail that in turn supports the essay's main idea, argument and/or thesis. Each paragraph in the body of the paper should include a topic sentence, supporting details that support the topic sentence, and a concluding sentence, which can also function as a transition sentence to the following paragraph. Most paragraphs contain 3-5 complete sentences but can contain more.

Topic Sentence

The main idea of each paragraph is stated in a topic sentence. The topic sentence illustrates how the idea relates to the thesis. The topic sentence should either be the first sentence in a paragraph or near the beginning. Topic sentences (like concluding sentences) can serve as transitions between paragraphs.

Supporting Details

Supporting details elaborate upon the topic sentences and thesis. Supporting details should be drawn from a variety of sources determined by the assignment guidelines and genre and should include the writer's own analysis.

- Expert Opinion
- Facts and Statistics
- Personal Experiences
- Others' Experiences
- Brief Stories

- Research Studies
- Your Own Analysis
- Interview

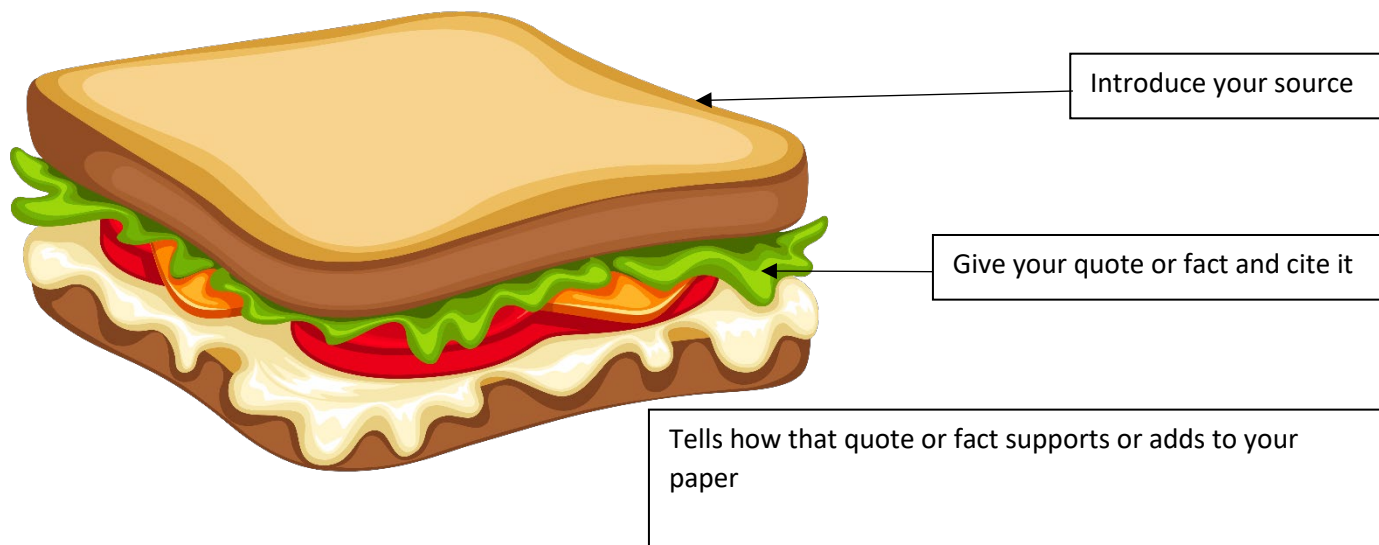
Concluding Sentence

Each paragraph should end with a final statement that brings together the ideas brought up in the paragraph. Sometimes, it can serve as a transition to the next paragraph.

Source Sandwich: Providing Context & Credibility to Quotations

It is crucial to provide your reader/instructor with enough information to show credibility and context to the sources you use. Giving context and credibility to a source is important to gain the reader's trust. Who is the author of the source you are using? The quote must also be smoothly integrated into the paragraph using signal phrases to let the reader know that a quote is coming up. An in-text citation allows the reader to refer to the corresponding reference list (APA) or works cited (MLA) page. The interpretation of the quote is essential to explain the quote, as well as link it back to the topic sentence or thesis statement to clearly state its purpose.

Can you eat a sandwich without bread? Sure... but it isn't as good! And neither is your essay!



Context

Use a topic sentence that introduces the paragraph's purpose.

Credibility

Introduce all sources the first time you use them with the author's first and last name and the source material's full title. Also, provide some brief background to who they are (a professor or a researcher? What makes them qualified to speak on the subject you are writing about?).

Check your instructor's guidelines for more information.

Integration of the Quote

Use signal phrases to connect the quote to the paragraph. See the last page for signal phrase examples.

Example (using APA): According to Smith, "... " (2020) OR Smith (2020) argues that "... "

In-text Citation

Place the in-text citation directly after the quote, paraphrase, or summary. The in-text citation contains the author's last name and a page number (MLA) or author's last name, year, and page number (APA) if you have it. The punctuation comes directly after the right parenthesis.

Example:

MLA: (Smith 23).

APA: (Smith, 2020). OR (Smith, 2020, p. 2).

Interpretation

Explain why you have chosen this particular quote. What does it mean? How/why does it relate to some aspect of your thesis.