Writing Well-Organized Paragraphs
Part Two: Body Paragraphs

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Graduate Writing Help Specialist, Student Learning Services
Learning Outcomes for Part Two

By the end of this presentation, you should be able to:

- Write body paragraphs with a clear purpose, topic sentence, signal words, evidence and summary sentence.
- Create successful content bridges to link body paragraphs.
Overview of Screencast (Part Two)

1. The shape of body paragraphs.
2. The purpose of body paragraphs.
3. The parts of a body paragraph.
4. Compare weak and strong paragraphs.
Body Paragraphs

- A body paragraph is any paragraph in your paper that isn’t part of your introduction or your conclusion.
The Shape of a Typical Body Paragraph

Coherent paragraphs are often shaped like a whole paper: they have a general – specific – general shape.

- The introduction starts generally by positioning the topic sentence early in the paragraph.
- The main part of the paragraph is narrower in focus.
- The conclusion broadens out again.
The Purpose of Body Paragraphs

- Your purpose may be to make a sub-claim that supports your overall thesis or position.
- It might be to define, explain, describe, report or compare something to something else, so your reader better understands your position and reasoning.
- It might be to qualify your position or to present a counterargument.
- It might be to rebut the counterargument or to concede that some part of that counterargument is valid.
Parts of Typical Body Paragraphs

- A **content bridge** -- connects the idea expressed in the paragraph to the idea expressed in the previous paragraph.
- A **topic sentence** -- contains the point of the paragraph, at or near the beginning of the paragraph.
- A **middle section** -- elaborates on or presents evidence for the point made in the topic sentence.
- **Signal words** – help guide the reader through the paragraph.
- **An optional summary** or **concluding sentence** -- connects the point in the topic sentence with the evidence presented or to the overall argument/thesis.
Identifying Parts of a Paragraph

Despite lack of research and effective policies, a number of agencies and band councils throughout the North are involved with programs aimed at increasing levels of youth employment. These programs generally fall into two categories: those aimed at extending schooling to make postsecondary education more accessible for indigenous youth and those whose mission is to prepare disadvantaged on-reserve youth to break the cycle of dependence and find stable employment (AANDC, 2013). An example of a program in the first category is the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut (TFN). This program is intended to educate and train Inuit youth so that they are qualified for government and land claims-related positions (Richardson & Blanchet-Cohen, 2000). An example of a program in the second category is the Prince Albert Grand Council (PAGC) Call for Action program, which provides unemployed Dene youth with an eight-month training program (Northlands College, 2016). Both categories of program aim to enhance the qualifications of northern indigenous youth, so they are better positioned to find employment in their region.

Courtesy of a former student
Identifying Parts of a Paragraph (cont’d)

Although there are many advantages to using radiant panels, ASHRAE (2012) also lists some disadvantages. Most of these disadvantages relate to improper design and control of the panels, such as a slow response time if the controls are not properly designed and installed. A slow response time means it takes a long time for the panel to adjust to the conditions in the room. Another disadvantage is the inability of the panels to add or remove moisture from a space, as radiant panels can only perform sensible heating or cooling within a space. In addition to the reasons discussed previously for the importance of moderating indoor humidity levels, there is also the added risk of condensation forming on the panels when they are used for cooling. To avoid these problems, panels are often coupled with stand-alone dehumidifiers in the space, or the latent load is handled by ventilating or drying the air before it enters the building. From the condensation problems and other disadvantages comes the motivation for designing a new heat and moisture transfer panel (HAMP), the topic of this thesis.

Courtesy of a former student
Comparing Two Versions of a Paragraph

Read two versions of the paragraph on the next slides and identify the following:

1. The author’s purpose. Is it clear? Is it to claim, explain, report or describe something?
2. The topic sentence.
3. The evidence that supports the point made in the topic sentence.
4. The concluding sentence. Does it connect the evidence with the point made in the topic sentence?
Version One

The first sighting of the platypus was reported in Australia in 1798. Preserved specimens were sent back to England, where they caused much scientific excitement. The platypus had a bill like a duck and laid eggs, but, instead of having feathers, it had hair. The platypus is now considered a mammal, even though it lays eggs. The platypus has hair, which, when examined in detail, is structurally similar to that of non-egg-laying mammals. These features of the hair were most fully described by the famous biologist Leon Augustus Hausman. Hausman died in 1966. His scholarly expertise on the topic of mammalian hair often brought him into the public arena, and once he was even called on to provide expert opinion on a sacred "yeti" scalp kept in a Himalayan monastery. Hausman showed that the hair scales of the shaft of the platypus exhibit the typical mammalian shift in shape between the base and the tip. The platypus also produces a milky secretion that is used to suckle the newborns. The milk is produced not from teats but from pores in the ventral abdominal skin. The milk has a much higher concentration of iron than that of the eutherian mammals. Hair and suckling of the young are features now universally acknowledged as definitive characteristics of mammals. The long and often controversial involvement of so many scientists in the documentation of platypus biology indicates the value of a socio-historical study of the engagement of the scientific community with this animal.

Courtesy of Geoff Hyde
Version Two

The classification of the platypus was first debated in 1798 when specimens of this newly-discovered animal were sent to England from its native Australia, causing British scientists to puzzle over its combination of mammalian and avo-reptilian features. Today, despite sharing some features with the birds and reptiles, the platypus is classified as a mammal. First, the platypus has hair which, when examined in detail, is structurally similar to that of non-egg-laying mammals. These features of the hair were most fully described by Leon Hausman, the pre-eminent mammalian hair expert of the twentieth century. Hausman showed that the shafts of the hair of the platypus exhibit the typical mammalian shift in shape between the base and the tip. Second, like other mammals, the platypus suckles its newborns by secreting (from pores on its ventral abdominal skin) an iron-rich milk. The engagement of scientists with the platypus has been a long one and is deserving of a study in itself, but today scientists concur that the presence of hair and suckling of the young are sufficient to definitively place this animal in the Mammalian class.

Courtesy of Geoff Hyde
A Platypus
# Comparing Versions One and Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERSION ONE</th>
<th>VERSION TWO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose unclear</td>
<td>Purpose clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic sentence not identifiable</td>
<td>Topic sentence early in the paragraph reveals the author’s purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too many extraneous points (e.g., the sentence on the “yeti” scalp in the Himalayan monastery)</td>
<td>Extraneous points removed or combined with sentences that contain essential points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No signal words to guide the reader through the paragraph</td>
<td>Signal words <em>(first, second)</em> to guide the reader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concluding sentence, but one that doesn’t effectively wrap-up the paragraph</td>
<td>Concluding sentence that connects the evidence to the topic sentence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Problems with Body Paragraphs

- Multiple purposes and topics: a paragraph should have only **ONE** purpose
- No topic sentence
- Topic sentence not general enough to be an **umbrella** for all sentences in paragraph
- Paragraph presents the evidence before the topic sentence
- Topic sentence located at end of paragraph
Problems with Body Paragraphs (continued)

- Insufficient evidence
- Too short and underdeveloped
- No summary or concluding sentence that links the evidence to the point made in the topic sentence or to the overall argument
Summary

- Strong body paragraphs begin with a content bridge that looks back to the previous paragraph.

- They have a single purpose reflected in the topic sentence, which is positioned early in the paragraph.

- Body paragraphs use signal words to guide the reader through the paragraph.

- They have an optional concluding sentence, which links the evidence presented to the point made in the topic sentence or to the overall argument.