

Paragraph Writing



What is a paragraph?

- ◇ A paragraph is a short piece of writing with one main idea in which all sentences are related. One paragraph = one idea from the essay's overall theme or topic.
- ◇ The first sentence expresses the point of the paragraph and all other sentences expand further on this point.
- ◇ The content of the paragraph therefore develops from a general statement to more specific statements.

Paragraph structure

A common structure for paragraphs in academic writing is as follows:

- ◇ **Statement** - the main idea of the paragraph is expressed as a generalization
- ◇ **Explanation** - the main idea is elaborated on and its meaning explained
- ◇ **Example** - the main idea is illustrated or supported by example, data or quote

A well structured paragraph starts with:

- ◇ A general statement that says what that paragraph is going to be about.
- ◇ Then expands upon or explains that idea in more detail.
- ◇ Provides examples to support those ideas
- ◇ Contains only **one** idea or subject.
- ◇ **ALWAYS** check with your lecturer or marker regarding paragraph structure, as some assignments may vary.

STATEMENT:

Australia is a society where economic inequality is pervasive and deeply entrenched.

EXPLANATION:

Familiar generalizations about Australia's unique 'egalitarianism' do not match with the factual picture. The social dynamics at work, and the levels of inequality resulting, are much the same as are found in North America, Western Europe, and middle ranking capitalist economies elsewhere.

EXAMPLE:

For example, studies of income and wealth distribution show that the top 20% of Australians hold 72% of the wealth (Dilnot, 1990) and the top 10% of households receive 40% of total income (Raskall, 1993).