**WRITING EFFECTIVE PARAGRAPHS**

**What is a paragraph?**

A paragraph is a group of sentences that develops a single idea. An effective paragraph will begin with a topic sentence, have supporting sentences that develop the idea of the paragraph, and will maintain a consistent flow.

Essential Elements of an Effective Paragraph:

* presents a single idea
* begins with a topic sentence that makes this single idea evident
* contains supporting sentences that develop this single idea
* is strategically organized to maintain flow
* has a concluding sentence

**The Essential Elements**

**Single Idea**

* Your paragraph should focus on a single idea, point, or position.
* It should not stray or develop new ideas.

**Topic Sentence**

* This is the first sentence of your paragraph and your main idea.
* Answer the question that the paragraph is supposed to respond to.
* Do not begin a topic sentence with statement like “I think…”, “I choose…” or “I am going to talk about…”
* Do not include supporting details in your topic sentence.

**Supporting Sentences**

* Give examples that support or prove your topic sentence (main idea).
* Be specific—facts or statistics, or examples from the story or poem.
* Make sure to show how your examples connect to your main idea

**Concluding Sentence**

* Restate your topic sentence.
* Summarize your main points or makes a final comment on the topic.
* Do not include any new information or state your opinion.
* Examples: “As these examples demonstrate…”

**How do I write a paragraph?**

1. **Make sure you understand the question**.
2. **Briefly answer the question**. This answer will be your topic sentence.
3. **Brainstorm examples that will support your main idea**.
4. **Choose the three examples that best support your main idea.** These will be your supporting details.
5. **Draft your paragraph.** Be sure to include a topic sentence, supporting sentence, and a conclusion.
6. **Revise your paragraph**.
* Did you answer the question?
* Is your topic sentence clear?
* Do your examples support your topic sentence?
* Does your conclusion restate your topic sentence and avoid introducing new ideas?
1. **Proofread your paragraph.**
2. **Publish your paragraph** by handing it in or sharing it with peers.

**Questions of Style**

Do…

* Write verbs in the present tense
* Use specific language (avoid general words like ‘very,’ ‘great,’ ‘nice’ etc.)
* Proofread your paragraph and avoid spelling and grammar mistakes

Don’t….

* Use the general “you”
* Use colloquial language (slang, “like,” “gonna” etc.). Remember this is formal writing, unless the assignment indicates otherwise.
* Use abbreviations

Sources

With help from

<https://kedatgym204.wikispaces.com/file/view/exercises_on_paragraph_writing.pdf>

<https://www.monmouth.edu/uploadedFiles/Resources_for_Writers/The_Writing_Process/Paragraphs2013.pdf>

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