

## Writing a Paragraph

Reference:

Lannon, John M. 1994. *Shaping the Paragraphs*. In, Technical Writing, Sixth Edition. Harper Collins College Publishers, New York, 693p.

A well-constructed paragraph will:

- Start with a topic sentence. This sentence, usually the first in the paragraph, expresses the main point of the paragraph. All following sentences should support the topic sentence.
- Have “paragraph unity.” In the topic sentence, find the key word(s) or phrase(s) that represent the paragraph’s main point. Each sentence in the body of the paragraph should support, clarify, or explain the key words. If a sentence does not directly relate to the topic sentence, take it out.
- Have “paragraph sequence.” A logical train of thought—a sequence—is necessary so readers can easily follow, or even anticipate, what the author is trying to say. For example, “Human error contributes to the range of results in a titration analysis” could be a topic sentence. The causes of human error, such as imprecise reading of the meniscus, or color-blindness, would then be discussed.
- End with a concluding sentence. This sentence brings the paragraph to a close by summarizing, or bringing to a climax, all the preceding sentences. Example: “Therefore, careful training of titration technicians is critical.”
- End with a concluding sentence that also “bridges” to the topic sentence of the next paragraph.

Lannon says this about paragraph length, “Paragraph length depends on the writer’s purpose and the reader’s capacity for understanding.”