

How to Structure a Paragraph

<p>1. Choose your topic. (Or your instructor may choose this for you☺) A topic is the general subject of the paragraph. There is only one topic per paragraph. NOTE: The topic and the main idea are not the same thing.</p>	<p>Instructor assigns "Mandatory Uniforms in Public Schools "</p> <p>Hint: You may have to do a little research.</p>
<p>2. Choose main idea. After thinking carefully about the topic, decide what main idea regarding this topic you want to write about. The main idea focuses your writer and answers this question, "What does the writer want the reader to know about the topic?"</p> <p>When the main idea is stated in a formal sentence, it is called a <i>topic sentence</i>.</p>	<p>Now that you've read and thought and free-written or brainstormed about the general topic of "Mandatory Uniforms in Public Schools," decide what your main argument is. For example, you could choose to be in favor of school uniforms because it fosters a more positive learning environment. You could also be opposed because it hinders individual expression. Either way, choose one side of the issue, and one overall reason to support your side.</p>
<p>3. Choose major details. Now decide what major detail(s) you'll use in your paragraph. Major details are the evidence you use to prove that your topic sentence is true and correct. Examples of major details include reasons, facts, statements by experts, results of research studies, etc. For this class choose three major details.</p>	<p>If you support school uniforms because it fosters school unity, you could say: 1. They eliminate discrimination based on clothing. 2. They eliminate distractions caused by vulgar or extreme styles. 3. They help unite the school because everyone feels included.</p>
<p>4. Choose minor details. For each major detail(s) used, you'll need minor details that help explain each major detail.</p>	<p>The minor details will add information to each of the major details you selected. These are the examples that you provide to help your reader "see" your opinion.</p>
<p>5. Create a summary statement. At the end of the paragraph, you'll need to write a statement of conclusion. The best way to do this is to restate your main idea in</p>	<p>After all those items are included, you'll restate your main idea. If you included enough information, this "summary statement" reminds the reader about the purpose of the</p>

different words.

paragraph.

Here's another way to think about a good paragraph.

1st sentence	A sentence that introduces your topic.
2nd sentence	A sentence that says what you're writing about - your topic was already written above - but this sentence lets your reader know what area you'll discuss in the topic. It's a narrowing down of a broad topic.
3rd & 4th sentence	Major detail with support from minor detail.
5th & 6th sentence	Major detail with support from minor detail.
7th & 8th sentence	Major detail with support from minor detail.
9th sentence	Restating your main idea (from sentence 2 above.)

If you prefer, you can generate a simple outline for a well-written paragraph, like this:

- I. Topic
 - A. Main Idea
 1. Major Detail
 - Minor detail about 1
 2. Major Detail
 - Minor detail about 2
 3. Major Detail
 - Minor detail about 3
 - B. Summary statement - restate the Main Idea.

Whichever way you choose to think about writing a paragraph, please note that the essential elements remain the same. If you leave out any of the elements, your reader might "get lost," and miss the points you were trying to make.