



Writing Paragraphs

While there are various formulas you can follow to write a paragraph in your essay, they all require you to do the same thing: elaborate on one key issue that you have highlighted in your introduction. It is important that you only focus on one idea per paragraph, and that these ideas specifically relate to the question. You must make it clear to the reader that you are following the map outlined in your introduction.

Paragraphs should always:

- Commence with a **topic** sentence. The topic sentence signals to the reader what your paragraph is going to be about.
- Contain evidence to validate/support your answer.
- Tie back to the essay question.
- Include the “content” words from the question.

Paragraphs should never:

- Contain more than one key idea.
- Raise an idea that you cannot support with evidence.
- Bring in new information that is not relevant to the topic.

Basic Paragraph Structure

P	Point: Outline the main points/topic of this paragraph
E	Evidence: Support your point with evidence and examples
E	Explanation: Explain how this evidence supports your answer/main point
L	Link: Refer this point back to the topic, integrating key words from the question to reinforce your response

Transition phrases like “Similarly,” “For this reason,” “Therefore,” “However,” and “In the same way that...” are a good way to link points together to create a cohesive argument. Consider the example below:

Example

Q: Identify two ways teachers can support the educational needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) students and explain why and how these strategies should be implemented.

P1	In order to support the educational needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) students , all teachers should undertake professional development to assist with their understanding of culturally appropriate pedagogies.	IDENTIFIES ONE STRATEGY (Professional development in culturally appropriate pedagogies)
E	At present, many teachers feel they are ill-equipped to teach Indigenous students, primarily because they lack knowledge about Aboriginal culture and history (Bennett & Moriarty, 2015; Craven, Yeung, & Han, 2014). For this reason, Lavery, Cain and Hampton (2014) argue that teacher institutes should develop stronger links with ATSI communities, and that pre-service learning should include partnership programs with such communities.	EVIDENCE (why and how)
E	Ultimately, it is imperative that teachers construct a rich and culturally sensitive repertoire for teaching ATSI students.	EXPLANATION
L	Therefore, appropriate professional development through collaboration with ATSI communities should become mandatory for both beginning and experienced teachers .	LINK

Things to Remember:

- Never have more than one key idea in a paragraph.
- Don't ignore the "direction" word in the essay, as this word tells you what kind of approach you are expected to maintain throughout your discussion.
- Back up, back up, back up! If you can't back up an argument with evidence, don't use it!
- Always link each paragraph to the question – a good way to do this is to integrate key words in the question throughout your essay.