

WRITING EFFECTIVE PARAGRAPHS

MAKE YOUR PARAGRAPHS EASY FOR YOUR READER TO READ AND UNDERSTAND.

1. **START YOUR PARAGRAPH WITH A TOPIC SENTENCE** that summarizes the main idea of the paragraph. You may have to add on to this sentence after first writing your paragraph.
 - Maintain the focus that you introduce in your topic sentence throughout the paragraph by making sure all the other information in the paragraph confirms and builds on the point in the topic sentence. Remove anything that doesn't belong; if it is important, create a new paragraph for that information.
2. **HELP THE READER NOTICE IMPORTANT IDEAS** by putting them in easy-to-find places such as the beginning or end of a sentence, by making them the subject or object of a sentence, or putting them in the main clause of a sentence rather than in a subordinate clause.
3. **MAKE YOUR WRITING FLOW BY USING TRANSITION WORDS TO SHOW HOW IDEAS IN THE PARAGRAPH RELATE TO ONE ANOTHER.** (See the "Transitions" handout for suggestions.)
 - Another way to create flow is by repeating key words or pronouns that stand for the key words as you go from sentence to sentence. Try to include some previously mentioned words or information along with some new information in each sentence.
4. **ADJUST THE LENGTH OF YOUR PARAGRAPHS** so that none is just one sentence and none is longer than 1/2 to 2/3 of a page. Readers like "manageable chunks."