

Body Paragraphs in an Explanatory Essay

The purpose of a body paragraph is to further develop, explain, and support your thesis statement. To do this, each body paragraph is unified around a main idea, stated in a topic sentence, fully explained, elaborated on, and supported by direct and indirect textual evidence.

Topic Sentence

Elaboration

Supportive Evidence

Indirect Textual Evidence

Direct Textual Evidence

Body paragraphs:

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Topic sentence: States the main idea of the paragraph, which is a claim that develops a portion of the thesis statement. Everything else in the paragraph will develop and support this claim; it's the unifying idea for the paragraph.

Transition sentence/s: Come after the topic sentence, expanding on the claim and providing the necessary contextual information in order to understand the claim being made in the topic sentence. The transition sentence/s provide a bridge to the evidence, setting your reader up for the specific details that support the claim.

Evidence/details: Evidence helps you demonstrate and support the claim you've made in the topic sentence. It can come in the form of either direct quotations or details from the text stated in your own words. What moments in the text support your claim? What is easy to paraphrase? What lines really show something you can't easily summarize in your own words and should be quoted? You should aim for a mixture of direct and indirect textual evidence to support your claim.

Explanation/elaboration: Explanation helps your reader understand how the evidence you have presented supports your claim. You must explain each piece of evidence you use. How do the details you have chosen from the text support your claim? Remember, avoid using I when you are explaining your thoughts. Your name is on the essay, so we know it's what you think.

There are many acronyms to help students write effective paragraphs. Here are a few you may have used in previous classes:

PEEEE

Point: The main point of your paragraph

Evidence: A quotation or a fact from the text that supports your point

Explain: An explanation of how that quotation or fact helps prove your point

Explore: A closer examination of a language feature of your quotation or fact

Evaluate: An explanation of how the evidence affects the reader's understanding

TIQA

Topic sentence

Specific textual evidence

Introduce the quotation(s) you will use as evidence

Quote

Analyze the quote

[Link](#) to further explanation