

Planning and writing body paragraphs

A paragraph is a group of sentences that focus on the same point or idea. Each paragraph is important to an overall piece of writing and should logically connect to other paragraphs to create a coherent overall structure. Body paragraphs come after an introduction and before a conclusion and make up the main “body” of an essay or report.

In general:

- body paragraphs are between 4–7 sentences long
- each paragraph focuses on one key point/topic
- *Section/Paragraph* subheadings are usually used in reports but rarely in essays

Always check your task instructions

Structuring body paragraphs using PEEL

It is important that body paragraphs are well structured to:

- show clear and logical organisation of key points
- include relevant information that develops key points with appropriate evidence
- show that task instructions and marking criteria are being addressed
- keep the writer “on track”

The PEEL structure can help you do this

PEEL Paragraphs

First sentence

- Point

The first sentence clearly states the key **point** of the paragraph using key word/s from the task instructions and unit content. This key point also appears in the introduction.

Sentences 2–6

- Explain
- Elaborate
- Explore
- Examples
- Evidence
- Evaluate

The middle sentences (2–6) provide relevant information to **explain** and **elaborate** on your key point using reliable **evidence** and if appropriate, **examples** to develop your point in support of your overall argument or topic of discussion. You may also be required to **explore** a concept/topic and/or show that you are able to **evaluate** your key point within the context of your paper.

- Use your task instructions to identify which E’s are required
- They can be used in any order

Final sentence

- Link

The final sentence of the paragraph should be a concise summary of the key point that reinforces the **link** to the overall argument/topic of discussion, and ideally a **link** to the key point of the next paragraph.

Planning body paragraphs using PEEL

Use this template to plan each of your body paragraphs.

- Start with key words relevant to the key point of the paragraph. Use terminology from your unit materials and reading/research. Use these key words consistently, rather than trying to replace them with synonyms.
- When writing your topic sentence, use the same key words you used to introduce your key points in your introductory paragraph. Your topic sentence (POINT) should make it clear what the key point of the paragraph is and how it supports your argument or topic of discussion.
- Look to your task instructions to help you decide which E's you need to develop your key point. There are no rules regarding how many or in which order they should appear.
- Jot down the author and date of the sources/readings you will use as evidence to support your information in this paragraph.
- Use your linking sentence to restate the key point of this paragraph and to link back to the thesis/position statement or forward to the next point.

Key words: [key concepts, terms and topic words relevant to this paragraph]	
Point [write a <i>topic sentence</i> to explain the point you are discussing in this paragraph]	
Explain, Elaborate, Explore, Examples, Evidence, Evaluate	Source/s Author, date
E	
E	
E	
Link [Summarise your key point and link to the thesis/position or next point]	

Check the [SCU Learning Zone](#) for more related Quick Guides.