Alexander College
WRITING AND LEARNING CENTRE

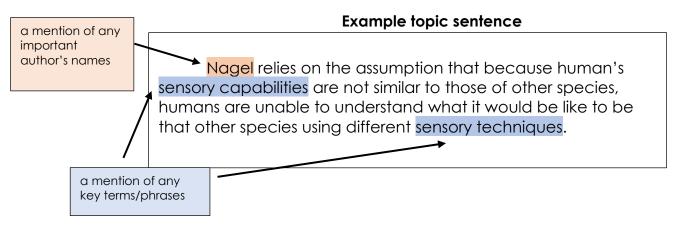# Academic Writing Guide: How to Write a Body Paragraph

What is a body paragraph?

A body paragraph is a section in an essay that provides support for the thesis through the explanation of one specific idea. All body paragraphs have four main components to them:

⇒ **Topic Sentence/Claim**
⇒ **Evidence**
⇒ **Analysis**
⇒ **Closing/Connecting Sentence**

Topic Sentence/Claim

The first thing to appear in a body paragraph should be the topic sentence or main claim. A topic sentence is a short and concise sentence that tells the reader what the paragraph is about, as well as makes a claim that supports the thesis. When trying to create a topic sentence, you should think about what the paragraph's main goal is.
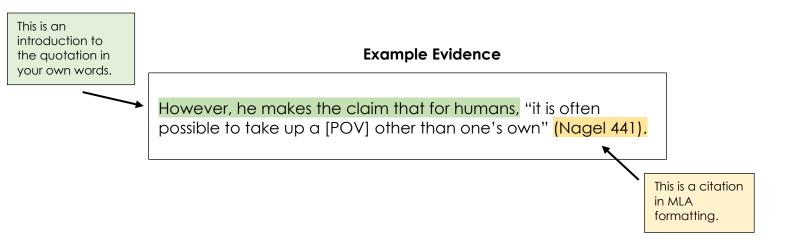
Example topic sentence

a mention of any important author's names

a mention of any key terms/phrases

Nagel relies on the assumption that because human's sensory capabilities are not similar to those of other species, humans are unable to understand what it would be like to be that other species using different sensory techniques.

Evidence

Evidence is anything that supports your claim. The evidence in an essay can be a:
⇒ quote
⇒ paraphrase
⇒ statistic
⇒ summary

Depending on what kind of evidence you have, you may want to dedicate two or more sentences to this section of your paragraph.

If you are planning on having multiple pieces of evidence in one paragraph, make sure that you provide an analysis (see below) for this evidence before you move on to the next one. If you want to know more about how to introduce evidence, please see the "integrating sources" document.

This is an introduction to the quotation in your own words.

Example Evidence

However, he makes the claim that for humans, "it is often possible to take up a [POV] other than one's own" (Nagel 441).

This is a citation in MLA formatting.

Analysis

The analysis is where all ideas are connected. This is the most important part of a paragraph and has three main components.

1. Tell the reader what the evidence is saying in your own words. This is usually a simple statement that helps the reader understand what they just read. This should not be a restatement of the evidence but a further explanation/elaboration.

2. Explain how the chosen evidence helps to support the topic sentence. In a literary analysis, this is where you would focus on the <u>tone, style, tense, language, meaning, or literary technique</u> that is present. In a research

paper, this is where you must explain to the reader how the <u>data</u> is proof of the claim.

3. Related the evidence back to the thesis. Now that the validity of the claim is proven with evidence, how does this then prove the thesis? Make sure that you clearly explain the connection between the main point of your paragraph and your thesis.

Example Analysis

This is an explanation of the evidence.

This is an explanation of how the evidence supports the thesis statement.

Therefore, two humans can have the same sensory capabilities that allow both of them to potentially feel the same feelings. An example would be that person A is describing to person B the feeling of jumping out of a plane. A describes the rush like a windy day and the drop like being on a roller coaster. If these feelings were reduced to physicalism and mapped out onto a highlighted brain, one would see the similarities in how two people react to different events with the same brain activity. This suggests that it is impossible to track the brain activity of other species and then make connections to how a human's brain lights up in different situations. The human experience is shareable only through verbal analogies, but there seems to be a potential for physical similarity between species. It is possible that the same area that lights up when a bat drinks blood is also the area that lights up for a human when they eat.

This is an explanation of how the evidence supports the main claim/topic sentence.

Closing/Connecting Sentence

The closing sentence is the last sentence of the paragraph that ties everything together. It is the sentence that shows the reader how this idea is going to connect to the next.

Example Closing Sentence

This is a finalizing statement.

This connection is only possible if one reduces experience to solely physicalism.

This is a brief mention of the main topic of the next paragraph.

The Complete Paragraph Outline:

Topic Sentence: A short and concise sentence that tells the reader what the paragraph is about while also making a claim that supports your thesis. **Evidence:** An introduction to the evidence and then the quotation, paraphrase, statistic, or summary. **Analysis:** An explanation of how the evidence supports the topic sentence and the thesis. **Closing Sentence:** The conclusion of the paragraph and a reference to the next one.

This handout was put together with help from:

https://www.umgc.edu/current-students/learning-resources/writing-center/writing-resources/parts-of-an-essay/paragraph-structure.cfm
https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/paragraphs/

For additional help, please make an appointment with a Writing & Learning Centre Humanities specialist at: https://alexander.mywconline.com