

Strong Body Paragraphs

A strong body paragraph explains, proves, and/or supports your paper's argumentative claim or thesis statement.

Topic sentence

Summarizes and organizes an entire paragraph

Although topic sentences may appear anywhere in a paragraph, in academic essays they often appear at the beginning.

When creating a topic sentence, ask yourself

- what's going on in your paragraph.
- Why you chosen to include the information you have?
- Why is the paragraph important in the context of your argument or thesis statement?
- What point are your trying to make?

Topic sentence

It should be noted that relating your topic sentences to your thesis can help strengthen the coherence of your essay.

If you include an argumentative claim or thesis statement in your introduction, then think of incorporating a keyword from that statement into the topic sentence.

Topic sentence

Use a topic sentence to show how your paragraph contributes to the *development* of your argument by moving it that one extra step forward.

If your topic sentence merely restates your thesis, then either your paragraph is redundant or your topic sentence needs to be reformulated.

Topic sentence example

- ▣ **Claim:** The University of Texas (UT) provides a diversity of social, academic and athletic opportunities for students. This can be a powerful positive force, but it can also detract from students' abilities to manage their time. More attention to time management training is needed to ensure that all UT students graduate with the ability to succeed in their chosen careers
- ▣ **Sample Body Paragraph: (1)** While there is little doubt that extracurricular opportunities at UT are a positive and critical component of students' overall development, providing students with time management skills is equally important

EXPLAIN YOUR TOPIC SENTENCE:

Does your topic sentence require further explanation? Example:

- **(1)** Upon a further examination, the mother's constant pressure on the daughter was beginning to wear on her.
- **(2) Jing-mei's mother would consistently give her daughter tests and the expectations to succeed were high.**

INTRODUCE YOUR EVIDENCE

- Readers should be able to move from your words to your evidence without feeling a logical or mechanical jolt.

Example

- **One only needs to look at past alumni to see the validity of this claim. As famous alumni George W. Bush states,**

INSERT YOUR EVIDENCE:

Insert/drop-in your supporting evidence (often quotes but again, evidence can also be in the form of personal examples, facts, statistics, etc.).

Example

“I sometimes overdid it when I was at UT, missing out on valuable academic opportunities. Fortunately, I buckled down in my senior year and managed to make a ,C” average and things have worked out fine since” (227).

UNPACK YOUR EVIDENCE:

- Explain what the quote means and why its important to your argument. The author should agree with how you sum up the quotation—this will help you establish credibility, by demonstrating that you do know what the author is saying even if you don't agree.
- Often 1-2 sentences tops (unless you evidence is particularly long or complicated that is).

UNPACK YOUR EVIDENCE:

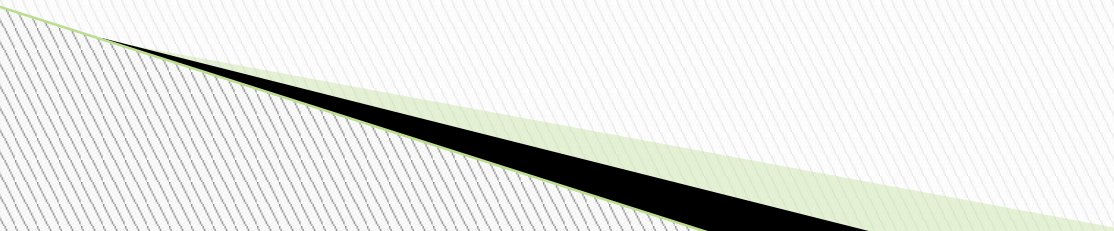
Example

- **In this example, George W. Bush is arguing that the detrimental effects of extracurricular excesses can be corrected in the senior year of college.**

EXPLAIN YOUR EVIDENCE:

- No matter how good your evidence is, it won't help your argument much if your reader doesn't know why it's important.
- Ask yourself: ***how does this evidence prove the point you are trying to make in this paragraph and/or your paper as a whole?***
- Can be opinion based and is often at least 1-3 sentences.

EXPLAIN YOUR EVIDENCE:

- While George W. Bush is certainly correct when he implies that it is never too late for a student to try to raise his or her Grade PA, it is probably better for students to attempt to balance academic and other activities early in their college career. Also, Bush assumes that all students can achieve what they want with a „C“ average, but many students need higher GPAs in order to apply to professional school, graduate school and for graduate-entry jobs.
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INSERT A CONCLUDING SENTENCE:

- End your paragraph with a concluding sentence or sentences that reasserts how your paragraph contributes to the *development* of your argument as a whole. **So, to recap...**

While extracurricular activities are often a positive and critical component of student life at UT, administrators should consider instigating a time management education and awareness course for all incoming freshmen. After all, not every UT graduate will be as lucky as George W. Bush; if our students are going to succeed in business and higher education, we need to first ensure they understand the importance of time management