Learning Outcomes

- Learn the components of a paragraph and how to build well-constructed paragraphs that logically and clearly develop your key ideas and tie back to the thesis/purpose of the essay.

- Understand how paragraphs help to organise your assignments.
What is a Paragraph?

- An assignment includes *a number of paragraphs* that *support the thesis/main idea*.

- Paragraphs occur in a *logical and systematic sequence* to develop the main argument/idea.

- *Each paragraph* contains *one key idea* expressed in (usually) 4 – 8 sentences.

### Why use paragraphs?

- Paragraphs provide structure, organisation and clarity to a piece of writing.

- Paragraphs allow the reader to identify and follow the developing stages in the presentation of information.

- One continuous piece of text would be very difficult for any reader to follow.
Components of a paragraph

- **Topic sentence**
  - *introduces the idea to be developed in the paragraph*
  - *links to the main argument of the paper.*

- **Supporting sentences**
  - *P - point*
  - *E - explanation*
  - *E - evidence* - data, information or ideas from your reading, in-text citations required
  - *This pattern may be repeated in the paragraph.*

- **Concluding or linking sentence**
  - *restates the main idea and leads the reader to the next idea and paragraph*

Coherence and cohesion

- To write paragraphs that are easy for the reader to follow and understand, you must present your information in a logical sequence and show the connections or relationships between the pieces of information.
- To show the connections between pieces of information you can use transition or linking words or phrases.
Types of links within a paragraph

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Link Type</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cause / Reason</td>
<td>as a result; because;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect / Result</td>
<td>as a result; hence; therefore; thus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addition</td>
<td>additionally; furthermore; in addition; moreover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition</td>
<td>if; on condition that; providing; unless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>although; by contrast; however; conversely; despite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>compared with; in the same way; in comparison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>for example; for instance; particularly; such as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewording</td>
<td>in other words; rather; to paraphrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>finally; hence; in all; in conclusion; in short; in summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Sequence</td>
<td>after; firstly; before; eventually; subsequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>as far as ... is concerned; as for; to turn to;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(McMillan &amp; Weyers, 2009, p. 294)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other techniques to improve cohesion

Some other techniques to improve cohesion include:

- **Repetition**: repeat key nouns or use a limited number of synonyms.
- **Pronouns**: substitute pronouns for key nouns.
- **Sentence combinations**: use compound and complex sentences.
- **Collocation**: words and phrases that ‘go together’. E.g. a chronic illness, economic downturn
- **Demonstratives**: this, that, these, those, the, etc
- **Comparatives**: less, further, additionally, similarly, likewise, etc
- **Substitution**: one, do, each etc
**Coherence**

The main method of ensuring writing is coherent is to have a plan.

How will you organise your ideas?
- Chronologically
- Cause and effect
- For and against
- Logical sequence

**Other Tips**

- Use short paragraphs for emphasis or effect where appropriate.
- Use medium-length paragraphs for normal flow of text and ideas.
- Use lengthy paragraphs sparingly (long descriptions, events), unless otherwise required by your genre.
- Avoid run-on sentences.
- Concessive sentences (typically those starting with ‘while’ and ‘although’) are often misread.
Common problems to avoid in your paragraphs

- No topic sentence.
- Too short/no idea development.
- No examples or illustrations from research.
- Examples/illustrations are not explained, developed, or commented on.
- Lack of organisation/multiple topics that don’t fit together in one paragraph.
- No first line indentation (formatting).

Essay structure and paragraphing for social media essay

- **Introduction**
  - Intro topic, context, purpose and thesis/structure
  - 1 paragraph (~75 – 100 words)

- **Discussion of ideas - Body**
  - Key advantages and impacts of using reflective practice on the student nurse
  - 8/9 paragraphs
  - Use Headings

- **Brief conclusion**
  - Purpose of paper restated and summarises main points
  - No new information
  - 1 paragraph (~75 – 100 words)
Introductions

**Topic/Orientation** –
opens the topic and establishes the broader context. Sometimes includes definitions.

**Focus/Thesis statement** –
states your thesis

**Structure** –
outlines your approach

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When writing your **Introduction**

- Use the key words or terms in the topic
- Be very clear about your purpose
- Provide the reader with information so that they can predict the overall content of your essay (a convention of academic writing)
- Mention the scope (extent and limitations) of your writing and define key terms, if appropriate.
When writing the body paragraphs in your essay

- **Finalise key ideas for each paragraph and write topic sentences**
- **Select resources** - decide which sources of information you will use to help plan and write each paragraph
- **Note down** - the key supporting points beneath your topic sentences (remember to record references for each point so you know where it has come from)
- **Synthesise ideas** - decide how to present information you have found in a logical way that supports your argument
- **Link ideas** - decide how you might link your ideas within your paragraph
- **Paraphrase and in-text reference** - to avoid plagiarism (and to give your work credibility)
Body paragraph example

For a nurse, social media can be useful for educational development by encouraging self-education and continuing learning throughout their career. (Randolph, 1992)

- For nurses, social media can be used for educational development by encouraging self-education and continuing learning throughout their career. (Randolph, 1992)
- Restate the thesis statement
- Summary
- Broad statement

Conclusions

**Restatement of the thesis statement**
- rephrases the thesis statement (different words)

**Summary**
- summarises the main points contained in the body of the text

**Broad statement**
- makes an evaluation, forecasts the future, or makes recommendations
Conclusion

The use of social media in the nursing profession is gaining popularity as a way of communicating. It enables career development by sharing information with colleagues and making professional contacts. The nurse can use social media for their own and their patient’s educational development through online health promotion. Its accessibility enables nurses working in remote areas to communicate with colleagues and allow patients worldwide to discuss health issues with a nurse. However, risks to reputation can ensue when negative comments are posted online or when unprofessional nurse-patient relationships develop. The nurse can also be implicated in legal issues through breach of patient confidentiality and nurses must also be mindful of miscommunication, so as not to convey the wrong message to the user.

Accessibility of social media is an advantage for student nurses, sharing experiences with others and gaining support. However the nursing student faces potential legal actions by posting patient information online. The opportunities that social media presents to nurses as a communication tool are evolving and therefore, it is essential that nurses and students are taught the appropriate use in order to maximise its benefits.

Paragraph checklist

- Have you got a clear broad topic sentence giving overview of key idea?
- Are you covering only one idea in the paragraph and not mixing ideas?
- Have you developed this idea in a logical manner?
- Is there a logical flow/progression of supporting ideas in your paragraph and not just a string of statements?
- Have you used transitional words/phrases to ensure that your discussion flows in your paragraphs and between your paragraphs?
- Have you integrated good evidence (other author’s ideas from credible sources) to explain and elaborate on the idea?
- Have you adequately paraphrased the evidence and provided a reference?
Well done. You should now be able to write your first draft. You will then review and write your subsequent drafts in order to continually improve your essay. The next video focuses on the sentence level and editing and proofing your essay.