



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Academic Skills (ACS)

Week 6: Paragraphs

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives

14/03/2026



www.uwtsd.ac.uk

Discuss

With a partner, discuss the following questions. Make notes while you discuss.

1. What problems often occur in workplaces or businesses?
2. What problems can happen when communication in a team is poor?
3. What problems can occur when employees are not trained well or do not understand their roles?

On your own:

Choose one of the questions above. Write additional notes/ideas about that problem to prepare for the next step.

Write

- Without use of a phone/the internet write a paragraph about your chosen question and its answer. You do not need to use evidence, just your own ideas and examples.
- You have 10 minutes to write.
- Do not worry about spelling, grammar, or structure for now, just do your best!
- Your teacher will set a timer

Questions Reminder:

1. What problems often occur in workplaces or businesses?
2. What problems can happen when communication in a team is poor?
3. What problems can occur when employees are not trained well or do not understand their roles?

Check Understanding

- *Follow your teacher's instructions to check understanding*

TEEL: A Suggested Structure



When writing in an academic style, it can be useful to use a structure for individual body paragraphs.



The structure is a structure that can help you to organise your ideas effectively



Unlike the structure for a whole report, the **TEEL** structure should be repeated for each main body paragraph.

TEEL

T: Topic Sentence Introduces the main idea of the paragraph. It tells the reader what the paragraph is about.

E: Explanation Explains the topic sentence in more detail. Shows why the idea is important or how it works. This can be multiple sentences throughout the paragraph.

E: Evidence/Examples Gives facts, examples, or data that support the explanation. This can be one sentence or more. It can include citations and/or the writer's own examples

L: Link Connects everything back to the main idea or shows the effect or result. **Is NOT the topic sentence simply paraphrased!**

Worksheet Activities 1 & 2

Head to the worksheet and complete Activity 1 & 2 with a partner

You have 15-20 minutes for both activities.

A Little Look at Topic Sentences

- A strong topic sentence helps the reader know what the paragraph is about. It is usually the first sentence.
- It explains the topic and what you want to say about that topic.
- A strong topic sentence usually has a **topic** and then a **focus** (otherwise known as a **controlling idea**), which shows **how** the paragraph will discuss that topic. **(if this is too confusing for you , just consider that a topic sentence has a 'main idea' and 'reasons'!)**
- Often, there can be more than one focus in the topic sentence, but it's best not to include more than 2-3 focuses in your topic sentence as your paragraph could become difficult to follow.

*Example: **Many companies experience problems with their websites or online services** which **can frustrate customers** and **reduce sales**.*

*Example: **Employee turnover can cause serious problems for companies,** **affecting productivity** and **company morale**.*

A Little Look at Topic Sentences

- Everything in the paragraph should relate to the topic sentence in some way.
- Vague/general topic sentences can confuse the reader and the writer, often leading to irrelevant information in the paragraph. This is also why it helps to include controlling ideas in your topic sentences.
- Simple sentences can still be academic. Keep topic sentences clear and easy to understand.
- Avoid starting a paragraph with a citation or definition (how can you expand on a definition? There is nothing to add!). Use your own words to open and close paragraphs.

A Little Look at Explanation Sentences

- Writing the development part of a paragraph involves expanding on the topic and controlling ideas presented in the topic sentence.
- This is where you provide more context, explanation, analysis, and further details to help the reader fully understand and appreciate your main point.
- Avoid trying to show off how much you know by keeping everything on topic.
- Use linking devices to connect these sentences
- Remember, the EEs of TEEL can be flipped, broken up, and moved around!

A Little Look at Evidence/Example Sentences

- This is where you provide evidence from sources for the arguments you've made in the explanation or provide further examples as support for your ideas.
- Try to avoid using too much evidence. This may confuse the reader and bury the structure of the report or essay.
- On the other hand, make sure you avoid giving too little evidence. Relying on your own ideas without any research to support them is problematic as well (for reasons discussed in Week 3!).
- It is a balance between your ideas and the evidence you provide, and this balance will take time and practice! Try not to be too discouraged by your first attempts. It takes time to get right, and that's okay.

A Little Look at Concluding Sentences

- Link/Concluding sentences can summarise the main idea and remind the reader of the focus and purpose of each paragraph.
- Try to avoid too much repetition of the topic sentence. Instead offer a perspective that **builds** on what information you have provided.
- Links can sometimes transition to the next point IF applicable, this is a little more of an advanced skill.
- Use transition words (e.g. 'therefore'; 'consequently') to show the paragraph is about to end and to signal the relationship between the evidence you have just provided and the main idea.
- Be concise: keep link sentences short and to the point. Again, keep it simple!

Worksheet Activity 3

Head to the worksheet and complete Activity 3 with a partner.

Back to Sarah....

- Sarah has been working hard on her report and she's fixed her TEEL issues. However, during peer feedback, Nick told her she still needs to improve her paragraph. What do you think is wrong with it? Discuss with a partner.

Many companies lose customers when their websites are slow or difficult to use. Slow-loading pages frustrate customers. Confusing navigation makes it hard to find products. Customers sometimes leave without making a purchase. A 2023 survey found that 50% of shoppers will switch to a competitor if a website takes more than four seconds to load (WebTech Research, 2023). Some businesses try adding pop-up promotions or flashy banners. Others invest in chatbots to answer questions. Another study found that 28% of customers stop returning to a website after encountering repeated technical errors (MarketInsights, 2023). These technology problems can reduce revenue and harm customer trust.

Coherence and Cohesion

- Sarah's new draft lacks **cohesion** and **coherence**
- **Coherence** means that your writing is easy to understand because all the ideas are connected and flow logically from one to the next. Think of it as making sure your writing is clear and makes sense as a whole.
- **Cohesion** refers to the way you link sentences and paragraphs together using words and phrases (linking language/devices) like "and," "but," "first," "next," and "however." These help your readers follow your ideas easily.

A (Possibly) Helpful Way to Think About Coherence and Cohesion

Ask a younger child about their day at nursery or school.

They might say: *"I had a good day at school."* → this is their **topic sentence**.

The child then describes why the day was good.

All the details are **relevant** because they support the topic sentence: e.g.

"We played outside" "Lunch was sausages!" "I learnt to draw a red circle" "Storytime was about a dragon!" "I had apple juice during break, I love apple juice" "I jumped in puddles on the way to school" "my boots are yellow!"

The Problem with Coherence

Young children often jump around in their story as they are not yet used to organising their thoughts before they speak. They also often don't have the language (yet) to signal where in their story they are (e.g. "first, we..." "next, we..." "finally, I...")

Even though all ideas are **relevant**, the **order** these ideas are presented can be confusing.

Relevance is not enough in your paragraph: ideas also need **logical order and connection to one another**

This (in addition to using the TEEL structure) helps the reader understand the main points of your paragraph clearly.

Worksheet Activity 4 A & B

- **Complete 4a and 4b with a partner**

Bring It Together

- Look at the draft you created at the beginning of the class.
- Rewrite it using the TEEL structure:
 - 1) Improve topic sentence
 - 2) Add your own clear examples (you don't need to find evidence for this particular case!)
 - 3) Strengthen explanation and delete anything irrelevant
 - 4) Add a linking sentence
 - 5) Include cohesive devices and check for coherence

EXTENSION: Peer Feedback

- Exchange with a partner and read their paragraph. Try to find:
 - 1) Their topic sentence and the controlling idea(s) within the topic sentence
 - 2) Their explanation
 - 3) Their examples
 - 4) Their link sentence
 - 5) At least 3 cohesive devices

Is their paragraph clear?

Offer one thing you **like** about their paragraph **and one** piece of advice to improve

Worksheet Activity 1 Answers

Topic Sentence

Explanation

Evidence or Examples

Link Sentence

One problem some companies face is poor marketing, which means customers do not know about their products or services. Often, businesses struggle to reach the right audience or plan their marketing effectively. For example, a survey found that 73% of small businesses are not confident their marketing strategy works (Constant Contact, 2024). As a result, even a good product may fail if customers are unaware of it. Poor marketing can also make it difficult for companies to attract new customers consistently. Additionally, 60% of small businesses say finding new customers is their biggest marketing challenge (Agility PR Solutions, 2024), which makes it harder for companies with strong products to grow and reach enough customers. Therefore, poor marketing can lead to fewer customers and lower sales, which can slow down business growth.

Worksheet Activity 1A & B: Answers

A) Sarah's paragraph is the **weaker** paragraph, **Nick's** is the stronger one.

B) Problems with Sarah's:

T (Topic Sentence): Vague and unclear. Doesn't say which website problems matter or why.

E (Explanation): Jumps between slow pages, banners, pop-ups, fonts, and chatbots. Mostly irrelevant and repetitive.

E (Evidence): Some evidence is misleading or dropped in without explanation. Example: "70% of users enjoy pop-up surveys" does not support the main point. Other stats aren't connected to the explanations.

L (Link): Weak and general. Just repeats the topic sentence and doesn't show the consequence or tie evidence together.

Worksheet Activity 1B: Answers

B) Strengths with Nick's:

T (Topic Sentence): Clear and specific. Shows the type of website problems, the context, and the impact on customers and sales.

E (Explanation): Explanations are logical and relevant. Problems like slow pages, confusing navigation, and broken links are described, and the effects on customers are clear.

E (Evidence): Evidence is linked to explanations. For example, 47% of shoppers leave slow websites, and stats about lost customers support the main point.

L (Link): Strong and clear. Summarises the problem and shows how it affects revenue, trust, and business growth.

Worksheet Activity 1C: Answers

TEEL in Nick's Paragraph:

Many companies experience problems with their websites or online services which can frustrate customers and reduce sales. Slow-loading pages, confusing navigation, or broken links make it difficult for customers to find information or buy products. For example, research shows that 47% of online shoppers abandon a website if it takes more than three seconds to load (Google, 2022). This demonstrates that even minor technical problems can directly affect sales and customer satisfaction. Technology issues can also reduce customer trust and make it harder for companies to attract new customers. Another study found that companies with frequent website errors lose up to 30% of potential customers (Adobe, 2023), which makes it difficult to grow the business. Therefore, addressing website and technology problems is essential for maintaining customer confidence and ensuring steady revenue growth.

Worksheet Activity 4: Answers

Sarah's ordered paragraph:

Many small businesses lose revenue when their websites are difficult to use because they often have limited staff and budgets to maintain them. Slow websites often result in slow-loading checkout pages because the software is not top-of-the-line or updated regularly. These slow checkout pages can frustrate customers and lead them to abandon their shopping carts. Small companies may also struggle to keep website security up to date, which can make customers hesitant to buy. A 2023 study found that 40% of customers will avoid websites that take more than five seconds to load on mobile devices (TechPulse, 2023), and another survey reported that 25% of customers stop buying from websites they consider insecure (SafeWeb, 2023). Some small businesses try adding unnecessary pop-ups or animations to attract attention and these features can distract users and increase users' security concerns. Investing in website maintenance is crucial for small businesses to protect revenue, maintain customer trust, and compete with larger companies.

Worksheet Activity 4: Answers

Sarah's ordered paragraph:

Many small businesses lose revenue when their websites are difficult to use because they often have limited staff and budgets to maintain them. **For example**, slow websites often result in slow-loading checkout pages because the software is not top-of-the-line or updated regularly. These slow checkout pages can frustrate customers and lead them to abandon their shopping carts. **In addition**, small companies may also struggle to keep website security up to date, which can make customers hesitant to buy. **For instance**, a 2023 study found that 40% of customers will avoid websites that take more than five seconds to load on mobile devices (TechPulse, 2023), and another survey reported that 25% of customers stop buying from websites they consider insecure (SafeWeb, 2023). **However**, some small businesses try adding unnecessary pop-ups or animations to attract attention, and these features can distract users and increase users' security concerns. **Therefore**, investing in website maintenance is crucial for small businesses to protect revenue, maintain customer trust, and compete with larger companies.