

Academic Writing and Research

Using paragraphs

Paragraphs are your best organising tool.

A paragraph is a chunk of writing. As a rough guide, a paragraph is about 6-10 lines, or 200 words. Paragraphs give shape to your writing. Use paragraphs to organise your ideas.

The job of a paragraph is to:

- introduce and main idea
- develop an idea

➤ Main paragraphs – one paragraph for each idea

1. idea
2. Idea
3. Idea

1. Main Idea

Point i

Point ii

Point iii

➤ Development paragraphs

- point i
- point ii
- point iii

Example

Para 1. The moon is made of green cheese

i: colour

ii: surface appearance

iii: texture

Development paras:

- i. Colour – green. Cheese is often green, especially when it's old. Give examples and support from quotations.
- ii. Surface appearance - the surface has holes in it. Examples and support.
- iii Texture – soft (soft cheeses have holes in them). Examples and support.

Writing frames.

Writing frames are useful templates that can help you get started on structuring different forms of writing. In the examples below, a number of alternative phrases have been given for each element of the frame. Use this formula to help you find your own phrases appropriate to the level you are working at.

Frame for forming a discussion

In this type of essay, you are asked to discuss a topic. Your aim is to produce a balanced discussion so you will present arguments for and against the question. The 'tongue-in-cheek' example below is designed to get you started!

Writing frame for forming a discussion (1)
There is a lot of discussion about whether the moon is made of green cheese.
The people who agree with this idea, such as the many astronauts who have walked on the moon, claim that they have evidence to support their theory.
They argue that all the holes in its surface are made by the many mice who like eating cheese.
A further point they make is that the surface is very soft and that indeed, it is probably made of one the varieties of cream cheese.

However, there are also strong arguments against this point of view. Scientists believe that what look like holes are actually craters, possibly caused by meteorites.
Another counter argument is that tastings of samples from the surface are not cheesy.
Furthermore, although the moon is very old, there is no mould on its surface

Writing frame for presenting an argument
Argument
It is thought that/This essay will argue that
Because/This is because/There are a number of points to make in favour of
The reasons for thinking this are, firstly/The reasons for taking this view are, firstly/The reasons for taking this stance are/The reasons for arguing this point are
So/Therefore,
Another reason is/A further line of thinking is....
Also/Moreover/In addition/Further more

Because/This is a valid argument because

Writing frame for forming a discussion (2)

Some people think that

because

They argue that

Another group who agree with this point of view are that
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They say

On the other hand

disagree with the idea that

They claim that

They also say

The conclusion, therefore, is that

because

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