

Lesson 6

The Body of the Essay or the Developmental Paragraphs

The development paragraphs constitute the body of the essay (or **the heart** in some references) since it is there where we explain, illustrate, discuss, or prove the thesis statement. It includes the evidence and support of the essay in addition to the author's ideas. Each Paragraph of the body must include a topic sentence that relates the discussion back to the thesis statement. In student's essays, the number of paragraphs in the body ranges from two to four, depending on the number of subtopics that divide the central idea in the Thesis statement.

Remind about the topic sentence

What is a topic sentence?

The topic sentence embodies what your paragraph says and shows how it is related to your thesis statement.

- A topic sentence is the main/controlling idea of a paragraph.
- It unifies the content of a paragraph.
- Topic sentences help the audience and the writer focus on the specific topic of the paragraph.
- It supports the Thesis Statement of an essay.
- All the supporting sentences in a paragraph must reinforce the Topic Sentence.

An effective topic sentence should:

- Provide new information.
- Be specific.

- Be strong (avoid starting the sentence with phrases such as there are/is).
- Avoid clichés, sayings and direct quotes.
- Support your thesis statement.

Topic sentences and comprehension

- Topic sentences can help you with paragraph cohesion. Each paragraph should have one unique main idea that develops a facet of the thesis statement, and that main idea should be unified in one paragraph – not spread throughout the essay.
- Topic sentences help readers recall the content of the text because they prepare readers for the ensuing ideas of the paragraph.
- Topic sentences often follow the “old/new contract” and link back to what was established in the previous paragraph.

The following are the main characteristics of good and effective body of the essay:

- Each developmental paragraph should discuss one aspect of the central idea. If, for instance, you were asked to produce a paper (essay) about the effects of smoking on one’s health, each paragraph should have an effect as its topic.
- Each controlling idea in the topic sentences should echo the central idea of the Thesis statement. For Example, if your Thesis statement was ‘Smoking is a destructive habit’, then each topic sentence should

include one aspect of the destructiveness of smoking
(for example to the nervous system, to the
respiratory system and to the digestive system).

- The developmental paragraphs should respect **unity** and **coherence**.