

Structure of a multi-point paragraph

Example of a simple multi-point paragraph

The Learning Centre is a busy place. One reason is that many students come to the Learning Centre to get tutoring help. They come for help with writing, study skills, math and course concepts. Often there are three to five tutoring pairs working together in the Learning Centre at any one time. Another reason the Learning Centre is so busy is that many students like to use its ten computers. They write papers, do research, check their email and use WebCT. So many people want to use the computers that there are often people standing around and waiting for a free computer. Finally, the reception desk is often busy. People come to the desk to make and change appointments, to ask for resources and to ask for information about the Learning Centre. People often have to line up to get help at the reception desk, especially when classes have just ended. Taken together, then, the tutoring, the computers and the reception desk all contribute to making the Learning Centre a very active place.

Topic Sentence	The topic sentence states the main theme of the paragraph. The topic sentence has two parts: • The topic (what the paragraph is about); • and the controlling idea (the aspect of the topic you will focus on). The topic sentence is usually the first sentence in a paragraph.	In the example paragraph: Topic = Controlling idea =
Main Points	The main points explain why you believe the topic sentence is true. There are usually 2 to 4 parallel points such as: • a number of reasons • a number of similarities • a number of categories • or a number of steps in a process	In the example paragraph: Three main points show the different ways in which the Learning Centre is busy. The main point sentences identify the things that make the Learning Centre a busy place (answer with just ONE key word for each point): 1. 2. 3.
Support: Explanation and Evidence	The support for each main point is the explanation and evidence. The evidence might include: facts; statistics; logical argument; examples; elaboration; description; or definition. In an academic text, the evidence generally comes from research sources. These sources need to be referenced. The second part of giving support is explanation. This is crucial because the reader needs to be told how the	In the example paragraph: What are facts that support the three main points?

	evidence supports the point that the writer is making. The purpose of the evidence and explanation is to prove the truth of the main point.	
Concluding Sentence	The concluding sentence restates the topic sentence, using different words. For long paragraphs, it may also restate the main points in the paragraph. The concluding sentence is not always included, especially when the paragraph is part of a longer piece of writing.	What is the concluding sentence in the example paragraph? Because this is not a long paragraph, restating the points is too repetitive. It is included here as an example in case you are writing a longer paragraph.