

## Examples of TEAL/TEEL paragraphs

While paragraph structures may vary depending on the discipline, genre, assessment task requirements, and your writing style, there are some basic paragraph elements typical in much academic writing.

Simplicity and clarity in structure is often key to good writing. By incorporating the following advice on paragraph structure, you can make it easier for your reader to navigate your writing.

You may have already heard of paragraph structures such as:

**TEAL** = Topic, Evidence, Analysis, Link

*or*

**TEEL** = Topic, Expand/Elaborate, Evidence/Examples, Link.

Note also the following in the five examples below:

### *Length, format and linking*

- The length is around 200 words and most of the sentences are short (although some are longer, more complex sentences too).
- Note the simplicity of the topic sentence. It is a broad claim that needs some expanding and specific examples. And topic sentences can also have citations.
- There is only one main idea per paragraph.
- Linking or transitional phrases help hold the paragraph together and to orientate the reader.
- The final concluding sentence often addresses the topic sentence directly and follows on logically from the discussion. Topic sentences can also be linked to each other (see example 5).

### *Citing sources*

- Evidence and examples have a good amount of detail and are cited. It shows that you have read widely and engaged with the literature.
- Citations are logically grouped together to provide supporting evidence.
- Analysis of sources takes several forms:
  - Highlighting significance
  - Grouping, comparing and contrasting sources
  - Making conclusions
  - Citations are also questioned and further problems raised.

Ask yourself:

*What are the limitations of a paper's findings?*

*What have they failed to account for?*

*How might it be improved?*

*What might future researchers look at in further detail?*

## Example 1

Sample research essay paragraph

Topic: Pollution and agriculture

- **Topic sentence**
- **Examples and evidence**
- **Analysis** (highlighting significance in context; posing new issue)
- **Linking concluding sentence** (link to next paragraph)
- **Other linking words**

Toxic to humans at very low concentrations, lead is a significant urban pollutant that impacts on urban agriculture operations (Collin et al., 2022). In Melbourne, sites with lead levels above recommended guidelines for vegetable gardens tend to be concentrated within a 10-km radius of the CBD, and in particular in the inner-northern suburbs (Hamm, 2024). Notably, most community-based UA operates in a similar area of Melbourne (Williams & Moss, 2023). This is significant because lead levels pose ongoing risk to agriculture, despite decades of eliminating the use of lead in petrol and paints. In one analysis, levels exceeded Australian guidelines in 8% of community gardens and 21% of residential gardens in Melbourne. In the same study it was found that lead levels increase with the age of the house due to the historical use of lead paint, and therefore caution should be taken in selecting a location for edible gardens (Laidlaw et al., 2018; Williams, 2024). It has also been found that sites close to main roads continue to be found to be significantly higher in lead (Hamm, 2024). Advice often follows that vegetable gardens to be located 80 metres from main roads (SGA, 2021), however this may not always be an option for community practitioners who already face the prospect of limited viable locations and rising land prices. Soil remediation by removing lead reducing bioavailability therefore appears worthy of investigation.

## Example 2

Sample business report paragraph

Topic: Marketing

- **Topic sentence**
- **Examples and evidence**
- **Analysis** (justifying inclusion; conclusion)
- **Linking concluding sentence** (linking back to topic sentence)
- **Other linking words**

With respect to promotion, our target market (Baby Boomers) tends to choose channels that allow for more communication opportunities, such as in person and over the phone, when searching for information or making a purchase (Lipowski, 2017). This justifies the omission of digital touchpoints in our IMC and highlights the importance of traditional marketing approaches. One strategy Tesla can consider here is personal selling. Baby Boomers have greater purchasing power than any other generational segment, with 50% of all US spending attributed to this segment (Best, 2021). Furthermore, VISA predicts that the over 60s cohort will drive US spending for the next 5-10 years, with 11 million more spenders over 60 by 2025 (Best, 2021). However, Baby Boomers require a greater time investment to make a purchase and value the retail experience and in-store service more than generation Y (Parment, 2013). Tesla's salesforce must therefore be highly trained and knowledgeable, not only in regard to the product, but of the target market's needs. This will allow them to convey the product's quality and longevity, while highlighting attributes that meet that generation's needs.

### Example 3

Sample essay paragraph

Topic: Nutrition

- **Topic sentence**
- **Examples and evidence**
- **Analysis** (summary)
- **Linking concluding sentence** (summary of evidence)
- **Other linking words**

Over-consumption of red meat is having a number of negative health impacts on the health of Australians. While many nutritionists note that red meat is a valuable source of protein, iron, zinc and vitamin B12, it is also accepted that some red meats tend to be high in saturated fats, which influence blood cholesterol levels (Turner, 2017). There has also been research linking red meat consumption to increased risk of stroke (Heart Foundation, n.d.) and colorectal cancer (Cancer Council NSW, 2019). So, while red meat can contribute to a healthy diet, the research suggests that it should be eaten in moderation. According to the Heart Foundation (2022) people should not consume more than about 350 grams of red meat per week, which amounts to one to three meals in total. Significant numbers of Australians exceed these recommendations in terms of their weekly red meat consumption (Evans, 2016). Current research therefore suggests that for many Australians a reduction in their weekly red meat consumption could have health benefits.

### Example 4

Sample essay paragraph

Topic: Architecture

- **Topic sentence**
- **Examples and evidence**
- **Analysis**
- **Linking concluding sentence**
- **Other linking words**

Buildings are the single largest contributor to the world's greenhouse gas emissions, using 40% of global energy and generating around 30% of the carbon emissions (Metzger & Wolf, 2024). Within Australia it is estimated that the construction industry is responsible for 25% of the nation's emissions annually (van der Heijden, 2018). Additionally, 25% of the world's water and 40% of its natural resources are consumed by buildings, and they are responsible for the generation of over 45% of global waste (Baharetha et al., 2012). These devastating impacts clearly highlight the nature of the construction industry and the need for change. Thus, the adoption of sustainable innovations for improving the sustainability of buildings has become necessary in every part of the world, and this has given momentum to the 'green building movement' (Darko & Chan, 2017).

## Linking from paragraph to paragraph

In the same way that writing tends to 'flow' better when each new sentence links to the last within the paragraph, it is important to have clear linking **between** paragraphs. The paragraph break is like a crossroads. Put on your indicator so the reader driving behind you can see which way you're going to turn, or whether you'll keep going straight ahead. There are a number of ways to indicate how the new topic sentence links to the previous one.

One strategy is to *repeat* key words or phrases.

Another strategy is to refer back to key words, phrases, individuals or organisations, *without* repeating them. For example:

- Using 'he', 'she' or 'they' instead of repeating a name.
- Using phrases such as 'This trend', 'this decision' or 'these recommendations' as shorter substitutions to avoid repeating whole phrases, names or titles.

### Example 5

Topic: Health promotion

- **Topic sentence**
- **Repeated key words**
- **Referring back** (without repeating)  
e.g. The shorter phrase 'This trend' is substituted for 'Rising levels of physical inactivity'.

Physical inactivity levels have increased around the world over time, mainly due to urbanisation and advances in technology. Lifestyles have changed dramatically with the development of labour-saving devices (Woessner et al., 2021). Urbanisation has caused ...

The growing health burden associated with physical inactivity is a matter of great concern globally. The most extensive study of physical inactivity prevalence to date indicates that, worldwide, 27.5% of the population do not engage in sufficient levels of physical activity ...

This trend can also be observed in Australia, where recent data show that only 24.5% of adults meet the national physical activity guidelines (ABS, 2022). Australian adult men are more likely to ...

## Useful linking words

Use linking words and phrases to frame how you present your sources and to help the reader navigate your thinking.

Addition	Comparison	Contrast	Sequence	Cause/effect	Example
also	similarly	but/yet/still	then	because	for example
too	likewise	in contrast	next	as	for instance
another	as/just as	despite/ in spite of	following this	due to	such as
as well as	in comparison	on the contrary	previously	since	including
in addition	compared to/with	however	before	hence	these include
furthermore	like	although	following this	so	to illustrate
moreover	too	whereas	after this	therefore	in particular
what is more	relatedly	on the other hand	in conclusion	as a result	an example of
importantly	also	notwithstanding	to summarise	thus	in this case
not only...but also...	correspondingly / equally	nevertheless / nonetheless	first(ly), second(ly)... finally/lastly...	Consequently / as a consequence	specifically

Learn more about [linking and transitional phrases](#).

## How long is the ideal paragraph?

There is no real answer to this question, and paragraph lengths will vary, but here is some general guidance.

- The paragraph usually only develops one main point (and doesn't go off track).
- Support the topic sentence with adequate explanation and with relevant, credible evidence.
- As a general rule, it takes 4 to 8 sentences, or 150 to 250 words, to develop a point adequately.
- Paragraphs can be shorter or longer and still be excellent but consider that if your paragraph is under 100 words it *might* be inadequately developed, and if it's over 300 words, it *might* contain more than one main point.

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