

How to Write a Tight Paragraph

Tight Paragraphs

Paragraphs are building blocks of clear writing. Because writing is storytelling, paragraphs tell mini-stories. To make the story behind your message clear, write with tight paragraphs:

(Transition) + one key idea in the topic sentence + development of the key idea

Example 1:

Topic sentence, then details.

Introduction to a journal article

A (Topic sentence) There are three different theories put forward for the very slow relaxation of catch muscles of molluscs. **B (States first theory)** One theory holds that catch is due to some unusual property of myosin in these muscles that produces a slow rate of detachment (12). **C (Explains a details of B)** In this theory, paramyosin would have no special role beyond that of providing the long scaffolding on which the myosin is positioned as well as the mechanical strength for the large tensions developed. **D (States second theory)** The second theory holds that tension is developed by actinmyosin interaction but is maintained by paramyosin interactions (13, 14). **E (Explains a detail of D)** Because the thick filaments are of limited length, interaction would have to occur through fusion of thick filaments (15). **F (States third theory)** A third theory, to which I subscribe, pictures a structural change in the paramyosin core affecting the rate of breaking of myosin-actin links at the filament surface (5, 16).

(Zeiger, 2007, p. 52)

A: Create an expectation in your topic sentence.

B, C, D, and F: Fulfill this expectation.

Example 2:

Here are some details and an explanation about what these details mean.

Research Writing Competence (Theoretical Framework)

A (Supporting detail) Writing is a skill that includes complex thinking processes and strategies. **B (Supporting detail)** Additionally, writers need to know who their audience is, why the audience would read their texts, and in what contexts their texts are meant to appear. **C (Supporting detail)** Writers should also be aware of the disciplinary practices of their audience, which are reflected in specific genre norms (Perelman, 2012). **D (Topic sentence states the message)** From the perspective of writing and genre theories, this general description of writing is essential when considering research writing competence.

(Cotos, 2017. p. 198)

References

Cotos, E. (2017). Computer-Assisted Research Writing in the Disciplines. In Crossley, S.A. & McNamara, D.S. (2017). *Adaptive educational technologies for literacy instruction* (pp. 198-210). NY: Taylor & Francis, Routledge.

Zeiger, M. (2007). *Essentials of writing biomedical research papers*. McGraw-Hill, Health Professions Division.

Further reading

Goodson, P. (2016). *Becoming an academic writer 50 exercises for paced, productive, and powerful writing*. SAGE.

Zeiger, M. (2007). *Essentials of writing biomedical research papers*. McGraw-Hill, Health Professions Division.

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