

PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE

The structure of the paragraphs in a paper is very important. Below are a few things to consider when structuring paragraphs within your paper.

1. Topicality

- a. When transitioning from one paragraph to the next, it is better to incorporate the new topic at the beginning of a new paragraph, and not at the end of a completed one.
- b. One of the best ways to do this is to connect the two ideas between paragraphs.
 - i. Compare and contrast the two topics.
 - Ex. Although cats are wonderful pets, some may argue that dogs are better companions.
 - ii. Relate the two topics.
 - Ex. As seen above, cats are wonderful pets, but they are rivaled by another family favorite: a dog.

2. Transition Phrases

- a. Transition words/phrases should be used at the start of a paragraph to enhance the flow of your paper.
 - i. When you want to build on your point, you can use:
 - Similarly,
 - Additionally,
 - Furthermore,
 - ii. When you're making a distinction, you can use:
 - On the other hand,
 - However,
 - Despite this,
 - iii. You can also reference prior parts of your paper:
 - Ex. While AI can be used as a positive alternative to human workers in industries with menial or physically-demanding tasks, it can also be very negative when it tries to replace workers in non-menial lines of work, such as the arts and humanities.

For more information, make an appointment for your course with one of our [content tutors](#). All appointments are available in-person at the Student Success Center, located in the Library, or online.

References:

Hurston, Zora Neale (1996). *Dust Tracks on a Road*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

- a. In this example, the writer references the previous paragraph by mentioning how AI can do menial work. This allows them to introduce a new point (how AI replacing the arts and humanities is bad) and add nuance to their argument by illustrating both the pros and cons of AI, which also grants them more credibility.

3. Quotes

- a. Paragraphs should not start with quotes. This will distract the paragraph from what you want your main idea to be.
 - i. Instead, begin with your own ideas that set up and follow the quote, so the reader has an understanding of what you want the quote to portray.
 - Ex. When writing a research paper, it is important to do initial research before you begin. It can even help with creating new perspectives on a chosen topic. Zora Neale Hurston, a researcher and writer, states "Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose. It is a seeking that he who wishes may know the cosmic secrets of the world and they that dwell therein." (Hurston, 1996, p. 143)
- b. For every quote you have, you should try to aim for at least two to three sentences of commentary. In your commentary, you should explain the context of your quote, how it supports your paragraph's topic sentence, and how it supports your thesis.
 - i. It can be helpful to imagine that your audience has read your source material but only has a surface-level understanding of it, and for every quote you pick out, they will say "so what?" It's your job to make a clear, genuinely debatable argument and explain how you came to your conclusions so they can understand.

For more information, make an appointment for your course with one of our [content tutors](#). All appointments are available in-person at the Student Success Center, located in the Library, or online.

References:

Hurston, Zora Neale (1996). *Dust Tracks on a Road*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.