

YORKWAC Infobase

Different Types of Paragraphs

What is a paragraph?

A *paragraph* is a unit of writing that develops a single idea in detail and advances your *argument* by providing support for your paper's *thesis*.

A paragraph consists of three basic parts: (1) A *topic sentence* that states the main idea of the paragraph; (2) *supporting details* that elaborate upon the main idea; and a *concluding sentence* that ties your ideas together and leads to the next paragraph.

Different types of paragraphs

Within the general framework of topic sentence, supporting details, and concluding sentence, you have options for presenting different types of information. Here are some of the most common and useful types of paragraphs.

1. *Generalization and example*

Makes a claim and supports that claim with illustrative examples

2. *Chronological order*

Lists historical events in the order in which they occurred in time

3. *Steps in a process*

Lists steps in a process in the order in which they generally occur

4. *Compare and contrast*

Relates people, places, things, events, or ideas to one another by showing how they are alike and/or how they are different

5. *Cause and effect*

Relates things or events to one another by showing how one thing or event leads to another

For information about different types of paragraph organization, consult the following Infosheets in the **YorkWAC Infobase**:

Infosheet #24, Basic Paragraph Format

Infosheet #25, Different Types of Paragraphs

Infosheet #26, Types of Paragraphs: Generalization and Examples

Infosheet #27, Types of Paragraphs: Chronological Order

Infosheet #28, Types of Paragraphs: Steps in a Process

Infosheet #29, Types of Paragraphs: Compare and Contrast

Infosheet #30, Types of Paragraphs: Cause and Effect