

## Example paragraph

Text messaging has been connected to a decline in students' writing [point]. There is concern that texting will have a long-term effect on the level of language (Aziz, Shamim and Avais, 2013, p. 12884) [evidence]. However, this does not clearly state how language will be corrupted [comment]. In contrast, linguist David Crystal (2008, p. 82) argues that people can 'adapt language to suit the demands of diverse settings' [evidence]. This suggests that language can be flexible and alter for different situations and audiences [comment]. Therefore, the concerns mentioned earlier appear unfounded. Nevertheless, the impact on future generations remains unknown [conclude].

## Paragraph checklist



### Question

Does it cover one main idea/theme?

Is there reliable referenced evidence?

Is there a balance between evidence and your comment (critical analysis)?

Have you avoided overly short (1-2 sentences) or long paragraphs (that mix multiple points)?

Do the paragraphs follow a logical order?

## Find out more



### Read:

- Burns, T. and Sinfield, S. (2016) *Essential study skills*. 4th Edition. London: SAGE.
- Cooper, H. and Shoolbred, M. (2016) *Where's your argument?* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Williams, K. (2024) *Critical thinking*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.



### Watch:

- Brunel University (2012) *The power of the paragraph*. Available at: <https://vimeo.com/44666462> (Accessed: 26 February 2025).
- University of York (2022) *Building a critical argument*. Available at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gdMJ19QgRc&t=4s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gdMJ19QgRc&t=4s) (Accessed: 26 February 2025).

# Study Skills



## Paragraphs



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- **Structure:** pp. 2-3.
- **Example & checklist:** p. 4.
- **Find out more:** p. 5.



What is a paragraph?



It is a sequence of sentences that discusses a specific point or claim.



Paragraphs can change for new topic, time period, place or person.




There is no set length, but it needs to be more than 1-2 sentences to fully develop your point.



Aim for around 5-8 sentences to fully develop a point (Williams, 2014, p. 69).

Use the diagram and questions to the right to help structure your paragraphs.



### 1. Point



- Use a topic sentence to outline the point of the paragraph.
- This may be followed by further explanation.

#### Questions:

- What is the topic?
- What exactly is that?

### 2. Evidence



- Bring in reliable Harvard referenced evidence.
- This could be direct quotations, paraphrases, statistics or visuals.

#### Questions:

- What evidence supports my point? Are there any counter arguments?

### 4. Conclude: Wrap up



- Show your final thoughts and link back to the title.

#### Questions:

- What is my final comment?
- How does this link back to the overall argument/title?

### 3. Comment



- Form a stance about the evidence.
- This can be based on your initial reactions.

#### Questions:

- How do I understand or interpret the information?