A successful thesis or research paper is built on strong, logical, well-structured paragraphs.

**Structure**

Each paragraph has a:

- **Topic sentence**: states the paragraph’s main point and connects to the wrap of the previous paragraph
- **Body**: comprised of sentences that support the topic sentence
- **And, sometimes, a wrap sentence** that closes the paragraph and reinforces its main point.

**Paragraph length**

The length of a paragraph depends upon:

- The complexity of the topic
- The purpose of your writing
- The medium (e.g. a newspaper article or an academic thesis)
- The needs of the reader (e.g. fast access to information or a comprehensively developed exploration of a topic).

As a general rule, for an academic paragraph, aim for 100-200 words. In a thesis or scholarly paper, you need to demonstrate that you have a sophisticated understanding of the facts, how they relate to each other and to your thesis.

**Cohesion between paragraphs**

Each paragraph should make one point and be logically linked to the others.

The ideas from the previous paragraph are referred to in the first sentence of the following paragraph to help the reader follow the direction of your argument.

**Example paragraph transitions**

- **Adding**: and, also, in addition, moreover, furthermore
- **Clarifying**: in other words, that is, in effect, to simplify
- **Sequencing**: to begin with, firstly, secondly, lastly, finally
- **Contrasting**: however, nevertheless, nonetheless, on the contrary, on the other hand, by contrast
- **Exemplifying**: for example, for instance, in particular, to illustrate
- **Conceding a point**: although true, even though, although, despite this
- **Summing up**: to summarise, to conclude, in conclusion, clearly then
- **Stating a result**: therefore, thus, as a result, consequently, accordingly, for that reason.