Structuring paragraphs and sentences

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Features of well-constructed paragraphs
- Unity
- Coherence
- Support

Expressing:
- cause and effect
- means and result
- similarity and difference
- definition of terms

Some grammar areas to focus on in proof-reading
- basic sentence structure
- subject-verb agreement

Three qualities make a successful paragraph:

Unity
The paragraph should focus on one main idea

Coherence
The sentences in the paragraph should be clearly related to each other

Support
The main idea of the paragraph must be supported with sufficiently detailed explanations, reasons, examples and evidence

Creating unity in a paragraph
- Each paragraph should develop one main idea
- The paragraph should have a topic sentence which states the main idea of the paragraph
  - usually placed in the first sentence of the paragraph
  - movement from a general point to specific information supporting that point
- The rest of the paragraph should develop the main idea
  - don’t include information which doesn’t develop the main idea

Wealthy industrial nations and developing nations face different issues in the provision of health-care. Industrial nations are concerned with providing the latest drugs and technology to treat the small number of ill people in the population. In these nations the focus is on the sophisticated treatment of conditions such as heart disease and cancer (Berin, 2003). Many of the poorer developing nations, in contrast, are faced with the problem of providing for the majority of their population the clean water, the basic drugs and the vaccines that the industrial world takes for granted. In these nations the priority is dealing with diseases that are widespread in the population because of inadequate living conditions and the lack of basic health care (Barrington, 2000; Knowles, 2003).

What’s wrong with the following topic sentence?

Make a point:
Wealthy industrial nations and developing nations face different issues in the provision of health-care.

Issues in the provision of health care for industrial nations and developing nations.
Wealthy industrial nations and developing nations face different issues in the provision of health-care. Industrial nations are concerned with providing the latest drugs and technology to treat the small number of ill people in the population. In these nations, the focus is on the sophisticated treatment of conditions such as heart disease and cancer (Berin, 2003). Many of the poorer developing nations, in contrast, are faced with the problem of providing for the majority of their population the clean water, the basic drugs and the vaccines that the industrial world takes for granted. In these nations, the priority is dealing with diseases that are widespread in the population because of inadequate living conditions and the lack of basic health care (Barrington, 2000; Knowles, 2003).

Creating coherence

Job and Organisational Correlates

Organisational climate has also been seen to contribute to the development of burnout and has received attention from researchers. O’Driscoll and Schubert (1988) found that the lack of communication between organisational levels and influence processes used by managers were strongly related to burnout among social workers, while participation in decision making was associated with reduced levels of burnout. In addition, Schultz et al. (1995) observed that in organisations possessing a “clan” culture, characterised by teamwork, participation and autonomy, employees displayed less burnout because they functioned in favourable work conditions.

Another important organisational variable that has consistently been linked with burnout reduction is social support. Two studies that link social support with burnout reduction... (Adapted from Whitehead, 2001)
Efficient management of human resources also requires knowledge and ability to implement macroeconomic principles. For instance, according to the Principle of Comparative Advantage, "everyone does best when each concentrates on the activity for which he or she is relatively most productive" (Frank & Bernanke, 2001, p. 23). This suggests that the underlying purpose of human resources ought to be to ensure that employees are trained, motivated and managed so that they can spend most of their time contributing to the company’s mission at the highest skill level they are capable of. In other words, human resources management needs to be proactive, rather than reactive.

On 5 April the Ministry issued a statement denying the accusations by the former Prime Minister. This move angered several former MPs.

To help the reader, it’s often a good idea to add a noun or a noun phrase to make it clearer what exactly you’re referring back to:

Some common words to make the reference back clearer and form a ‘bridge’ to your developing argument:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For things that happen:</th>
<th>For things that are done:</th>
<th>For views:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>incident</td>
<td>action</td>
<td>idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>event</td>
<td>move</td>
<td>view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>situation</td>
<td>reaction</td>
<td>attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>circumstances</td>
<td>behaviour</td>
<td>perception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development</td>
<td>practice</td>
<td>perspective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Managing external cycles

As well as major ‘one-off’ changes, many organisations have to deal with cyclic fluctuations in business. These may be caused by endemic, long-term matters such as the evolution of the organisation’s products through a ‘product life cycle’—from innovations, to mature products, to obsolescent products. They may be economic cycles of growth and stagnation lasting a few months or several years. Or there may be regular patterns such as the “Christmas rush” or irregular and unpredictable events such as a ‘sudden craze’.

Factors affected include inventory, production capacity, and staffing.

Phrases for expressing cause and effect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nouns</th>
<th>Verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cause</td>
<td>C causes E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C is the cause of E</td>
<td>C results in E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C is one factor in E</td>
<td>C brings about E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C is the reason for E</td>
<td>C creates E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect</td>
<td>C gives rise to E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E is the result of C</td>
<td>C leads to E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E is the consequence of C</td>
<td>C produces E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E is the outcome of C</td>
<td>C forces E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E plays a part in E</td>
<td>C plays a part in E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To attribute E to C</td>
<td>To blame C for E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Make sure that you use the appropriate form and tense.
Expressing cause and effect

The Napier factory closed down in 1955. Three hundred people lost their jobs.

Inside a sentence:
The factory closed down in 1955, resulting in the loss of three hundred jobs.

As a result of the closure of the factory in 1955, three hundred people lost their jobs.

Outside a sentence:
The factory closed down in 1955. As a result, three hundred people lost their jobs.

Organising and connecting information in your paragraphs: Means and result

Example 1:
Result: Something that is achieved
You can avoid paying interest on your credit card bill by making a complete payment at the first billing.

Means: How it is achieved
As a result of the closure of the factory in 1955, three hundred people lost their jobs.

Example 2:
Organisations that survive are better adapted to environmental changes than other organisations. Some organisations adapt by changing their strategies and structures. For example Sony has diversified away from its origins as a manufacturer of electronic equipment and has evolved into a global entertainment giant. Other organisations adapt by moving into environments which are more suitable to their organisational characteristics. One example...

(Adapted from Inkson & Kolb, 2002)

Edit this short extract:

Product innovation
Organization would gain competitive advantage through product innovation. Product innovation defines as “innovation that results in the creation of a new or improved good or service” (Zeffan, & Fitzgerald, 2006, p. 508). For example, Japanese companies gain advantage in home electronic markets, they focus on small, compact, low capacity model home electronic products, but other countries did not treated as important and attractive for them (Porter, 2001).

Edit this short extract:

Organisations can gain competitive advantage through product innovation. Product innovation can be defined as “innovation that results in the creation of a new or improved good or service” (Zeffan, & Fitzgerald, 2006, p. 508). For example, (several) Japanese companies have gained competitive advantage in the home electronics market, by focusing on small, compact, low capacity model home electronic products, which other countries did not consider important and attractive (Porter, 2001).

Always check for subject-verb agreement!

Wealthy industrial nations and developing nations face different issues in the provision of health-care. Industrial nations are concerned with providing the latest drugs and technology to treat the small number of ill people in the population. In these nations the focus is on the sophisticated treatment of conditions such as heart disease and cancer (Berin, 2003). Many of the poorer developing nations, in contrast, are faced with the problem of providing for the majority of their population the clean water, the basic drugs and the vaccines that the industrial world takes for granted. In these nations the priority is dealing with diseases that are widespread in the population because of inadequate living conditions and the lack of basic health care (Barrington, 2000; Knowles, 2003).

(Adapted from Pakenham, 2001)
Identify main points of comparison as you read
Use a table to help you take notes and organise your paragraph

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industrial nations</th>
<th>Developing nations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ..........</td>
<td>1. ..........</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ..........</td>
<td>2. ..........</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organising and connecting points of comparison

**Expressing similarity**
- Children in private schools have several problems in common with children in government schools. For example, in both sectors of the education system, children struggle with issues such as teasing and bullying.
- Children in public schools have problems with bullying; likewise, many children in private schools face emotional and physical victimisation on a regular basis.

**Expressing difference**
- Smith and Jones (1999) distinguish between deliberate cruelty towards other children and unintentional cruelty. An awareness of this distinction is useful for a teacher who has to deal with an accusation of bullying in the classroom.

Extract from Inkson and Kolb, 2002, p.7:
Organisations are formal entities in which a complex interaction of people, materials, and money is used for the creation and distribution of goods and services. The organisations in which managers work include not only the familiar business organisations involved in manufacture, retailing, wholesaling, the supply of services, etc. for profit, but also government owned organisations, state-owned enterprises and the like – for example, schools, universities, hospitals and government departments.

Possible use in an assignment: Quote main idea
Inkson and Kolb (2002) define organisations as “formal entities in which a complex interaction of people, materials, and money is used for the creation and distribution of goods and services” (p.7). They point out that the work of managers is not confined to organisations aimed at the production and supply of goods and services for profit; it also takes place in organisations owned and run by the government or state, such as universities and schools.

Explain the rest in your own words

Interpret and apply definitions in assignments

**Forecasting** is the systematic attempt to estimate future environmental conditions
- In what way is forecasting **systematic**?

**Environmental partnerships** involve an organisation forming effective relationships with other institutions or individuals in an attempt to alter the environmental pressure it faces.
- Examples of companies which have done this?
- How has it been **effective**?

Three qualities make a successful paragraph:

**Unity**
The paragraph should focus on one idea

**Coherence**
The sentences in the paragraph should be clearly related to each other

**Support**
The main idea of the paragraph must be supported with sufficiently detailed explanations, reasons, examples and evidence
During the past decade bullying has received growing attention in organisation research. Researchers have reported alarming findings about the negative consequences of bullying, both for individuals and the organisations concerned. Thus bullying can be extremely costly, both for organisations and for society as a whole.

- What are the findings?
- Which researchers?

(Adapted from Salin, 2003)
Interrupters may come between the Subject and Verb-Phrase

Subject  Interrupter  Verb-phrase
(Complete... (Offers Additional Information) ...Idea)
The researcher, a leading academic, concluded...
The committee, which was formed ad hoc, decided...
This model, despite its popularity, has several...
This study, although narrow in scope, has shown...
Notice the commas on both sides of the interrupter.

Be careful with interrupters and try to keep the subject and verb-phrase close together.

Subject, Interrupter, Verb-Phrase

Smith and Jones (2005), in their later work with patients showing symptoms of chronic insomnia and those who exhibited signs of moderate sleep deprivation due to patterns of pre-sleep problem solving behaviour (both verbal and mental), modified their treatment plan to include exercise therapy.

Trailers may come after the Subject/Verb-Phrase

Subject  Verb-Phrase
(= Complete Idea)
The researcher concluded that stereotypes still exist
declined upon a new policy

although they are less prevalent... that gives tenants the power to...

Always check pronoun agreement and subject-verb agreement.

Summary

- Well-constructed paragraphs are characterised by:
  - Unity: One main idea in a paragraph
  - Coherence: Supporting ideas clearly related
  - Support: Enough evidence to convince reader

- Use appropriate phrases to express relationships between ideas in a sentence and between sentences

- Structure sentences carefully:
  - Must contain main subject/verb phrase
  - Add secondary elements carefully
  - Check subject-verb agreement

References