

## **Paragraph Unity, Coherence and Development**

**Here are some of the many things a paragraph does:**

- Tells a story
- Lists (catalogues, enumerates, itemizes)
- Shows how something is done
- Reasons (syllogistic, dialectical, inductive)
- Describes
- Explains
- Compares
- Defines a term
- Gives examples
- Analyzes (takes something apart)
- Synthesizes (puts two or more ideas together showing their relationship)
- Cites (refers to an authority)
- Evaluates (explains how good something is or what it's good for)
- Offers a hypothesis (makes an educated guess)
- Gives a history
- Projects the future

Paragraphs do many things in our papers, but well-written papers require unified, coherent and adequately developed paragraphs.

### **-Unity**

Just as the thesis of your paper should concern one main idea, the rest of your paper too should concern that one idea. Each paragraph of your paper should concentrate on a single focus that helps bring the reader to your conclusion. Each paragraph should have no more than one focus, which becomes like a thesis for the paragraph, often expressed in a topic sentence in the beginning. Although many topic sentences are not explicit, or are found elsewhere in the paragraph, it may prove helpful to your argument and your reader's understanding to include a clear topic sentence at the beginning of each paragraph.

### **-Coherence**

You want your reader to understand your paper. Having a coherent paper where ideas transition smoothly from one to the next will make your paper easy to follow and pleasurable to read. To create coherence, carry ideas from one sentence to another in a natural, logical way. Also, you can create coherence between sentences with language by repeating key words and synonymous words and by using pronouns, parallel structure and transitional phrases.

### **-Development**

Sufficient development varies among paragraphs, but a well-developed paragraph will support its topic sentence just as the paper supports the thesis. Paragraphs with little information may not be adequately developed. Depending on your topic, make sure you have explained, described, analyzed, illustrated, compared, contrasted, examined, defined, evaluated and cited details and data enough to suit your purpose.

Your paragraphs shouldn't have irrelevant details, digressions or deviations that distract from the unity, coherence or development of your paper.