

STYLE: PARAGRAPH-LEVEL

MAKE PARAGRAPHS SELF-CONTAINED UNITS.

Paragraphs are “self-contained” meaning that when extracted from the entire document, a single paragraph can stand on its own (with its own meaning, purpose, and content). Moreover, paragraphs should be written in a way that the paragraph (as a whole) can stand alone without much help from preceding paragraphs or the paragraphs that follow. Therefore, a paragraph is a self-contained entity. The only exceptions are deliberate transitory elements (such as sentences at the end of the paragraph which foretell of incoming ideas, etc.).

WRITE OUT THE ABBREVIATION ONCE.

Typically, in a document, when an abbreviation or acronym is present, they are spelled out and defined.

Revised:

HTML, which stands for Hypertext Markup Language, is a code used for creating internet pages.

-or-

Hypertext Markup Language (or HTML) is a type of code used to write webpages.

Oftentimes, if you explain the term and its abbreviation once, you don't need to do it again. However, explaining the term later in the paper (as a courtesy) is always appreciated, especially in areas where its understanding might be important.

EXPLAIN YOUR TERMS.

When you write for a general audience, expect that your reader does not understand any of your terms or how processes work. Therefore, be prepared to fully explain complex terms that you use or describe how a complex process works.

Terms may differ from author to author. Therefore, in some cases, you may have to define any complex terms and/or processes in order to help the reader to understand them.

Example: there are many conceptions of the word Feminist. Feminist could refer to many different denotations and connotations. As you may know, there are different types of feminism as well either historical or conceptual:

First-Wave feminism (searching for basic equality for women, such as voting)

Second-Wave feminism (searching for absolute equality for women)

Third-Wave feminisms (who note a failure of second-wave feminism and oppose traditional roles of women)

Post-Feminism (noting some success of Second-Wave feminism, but who long for the return of some traditional roles of women)

Radical Feminism (who do not believe that men contribute anything useful to feminism and who generally assert that women should maintain some form of gender dominance).

So, when you write, you want to clarify what you mean and use details to elucidate (or explain) exactly what you mean.

Example: Laura is a feminist. (Worse)

Revised: Laura is a feminist, a person who believes in equality for women. (Better)

Revised: Laura is a feminist, a person who strives for equality for women yet still believes in traditional roles of the woman such as child-rearing and staying-at-home mothering). (Best)

Revised: Laura is a Post-Feminist, who strives for equality but who believes in some of the traditional roles of women. (Best)

(*) Note: These definitions are encapsulated and do not in anyway represent the entirety of feminism or its divisions

KEEP YOUR PARAGRAPHS THE SAME TENSE.

In a single paragraph, the tense remains consistent.

KEEP YOUR POINT OF VIEW THE SAME.

In a single paragraph, the point of view remains consistent.

ADD TRANSITIONS BETWEEN PARAGRAPHS.

Three types of paragraph-level transitions are available to writers.

1) Use Conjunctive Adverbs

Example:

Justin really likes going to college. He likes his professors, and he seems to learn well from them. He likes living in the dorms with his high-school buddies. And, he's realizes that college presents the opportunity to date more people. **HOWEVER**, Justin has realized that there are many hazards to dating in college. Unlike the people that he knew in high school, he is unsure if he can trust an unknown person. In high school, everyone knows everyone, and people have reputations which are very public. Justin might know more about a person before dating them. In college, things are different. Hardly anyone knows anyone else.

2) Use Regular Adverbs.

Example:

When Catherine takes photographs, she normally has a very distinct process. She is an artist after all. And, taking the right kinds of pictures is very important to her. She wants to have a decent portfolio in order to work as a professional. So, she adheres to her process carefully.

FIRST, she makes sure that she finds a good subject. She moves them into position, and she asks them very specific questions about their best sides and their sensitivity to light. Catherine makes every effort to align the subject with a good background. She considers color contrast really important in obtaining a good picture.

SECOND, she makes sure that she has the right equipment. She often works with both digital and traditional types of photographic equipment. She uses digital to photograph things which need to have their intensity and sharpness adjusted. And, she likes to use traditional photographic equipment to catch time-sensitive subjects (such as flowers blooming). She can often set the exposure more easily with her older cameras than with the digital ones.

3) Allude to the next paragraph in the last sentence of the paragraph.

Example:

Modern Olympic judo focuses on the techniques of throwing an opponent. Further, Olympic judo also focuses on grappling with him when the opponent arrives on the ground. Both throwing and grappling techniques are found in modern Olympic Judo. Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, a derivative of judo, extends the limitations of Olympic judo by incorporating older techniques not used in modern Olympic judo.

The techniques of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu include many banned techniques in Olympic Judo. These techniques are similar to those found in the pre-Kodokan judo era (when judo was more like traditional jujitsu). These techniques incorporate punches and joint-locks not found in Olympic judo. Since the purpose of Olympic Judo is sport, then the purpose of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu is obviously self-defense. Both, while different, are useful in their own ways.

4) Ask a question in the last sentence of your paragraph. Then, answer it with the next paragraph.