Study skills are an important element in achieving success on your course.

The Study Skills Team,
Cherie Cartwright & Helen Digman,
provide one-to-one help with all aspects of study skills
such as:

- Planning and structuring assignments
  - Literature Reviews
  - Developing academic writing
    - Critical Analysis
- Referencing (One-to-ones/workshops)
  - Academic Language

If you would like to discuss and develop your academic skills you can arrange to see a member of the study skills team for an appointment, or call in to see us in the HE Library or the Learning Curve.

We hope you enjoy your time studying with Barnsley College.

We look forward to seeing you!

# Appointments are available during term time and term time holidays:

Monday	8.30am — 6pm
Tuesday	8.30am — 4.30pm
Wednesday	8.30am — 8pm
Thursday	8.30am — 4.30pm
Friday	8.30am — 12.30pm

# Academic essay writing template



# Constructing paragraphs

# **Academic essay writing template**

# **Introduction** – approximately 10% of word count

Introduce the topic of the essay and then state how you are going to approach it.

e.g. Introduce / establish background to the topic Establish the reason for writing the essay (perhaps re-write

the essay title, including the instruction words).

Outline how the essay will be answered:

- This essay will......describe/analyse/discuss/evaluate etc.
- This essay aims firstly to examine....
- Secondly, important issues such as.....
- Finally.....will be discussed in order to establish....

Useful link: http://

www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/

introducing-work/

# **Useful phrases for paragraph points**

# Transition Words and Phrases

Agreement / Addition / Similarity

in the first place not only ... but also as a matter of fact in like manner in addition coupled with in the same fashion / way first, second, third in the light of not to mention to say nothing of equally important by the same token

again to and also then equally identically uniquely like as too

moreover as well as together with of course likewise comparatively correspondingly similarly furthermore additionally

Conclusion / Summary / Restatement

as can be seen generally speaking in the final analysis all things considered as shown above in the long run given these points as has been noted in a word for the most part

after all in fact in summary in conclusion in short in brief in essence to summarize on balance altogether

overall ordinarily usually by and large to sum up on the whole in any event in either case all in all

This information is taken from https://www.smart-words.org/linking-words/ transition-words.html

The topic sentence outlines the main point of the paragraph and is linked to the overall thesis of the essay.

Evidence relating to the main point but questioning the validity of the

Further, broadly supportive, evidence in relation to the main point.

Concluding sentence relating back to main issue of the feel good factor and suggesting further studies would help.

emotions.

Topic sentence of following paragraph thematically linked (the benefits of chocolate) to previous paragraph

Example and

evidence included

intopic sentence.

Elaboration of main

point, which adds

more detail and, in

this case, evidence

for the main claimin

the topic sentence.

Further evidence

which questions the

validity of the main

point

Another possible positive influence of chocolate is upon cardiovascular health. Chocolate, processed accordingly, can be a provider of significant quantities of heart-friendly flav anols (Hannum, Schmitz, & Keen, 2002) which help in delaying blood clotting and reducing inflammation (Schramm et al., 2001).

Consumption of chocolate is something that many enjoy,

and there is evidence (Parker, Parker, & Brotchie, 2006)

several studies, such as Macht and Dettmer (2006) and

effect, Yet, as Parker, Parker and Brotchie (2006) note, the

Macht and Mueller (2007), which appear to confirm this

mood effects of chocolate do not last long. In addition,

mood is something that is difficult to isolate and quantify

and aside from the study by Macht and Dettmer (2006)

consider is raised by Macht and Dettmer (2006), whose study found that positive responses to chocolate correlated

more with anticipation and temporary sensory pleasure.

As these authors stress, "temporal tracking of [both]

whereas guilt was also a statistically significant factor for

many, for whom the feel-good effect would be minimalised.

positive and negative emotions" (p. 335) before and after

consuming chocolate in future studies could help in further

understanding the 'feel good' effect and more negative

there appears to be little research focus on any longer term. mood affecting influences of chocolate. Another point to

systematic review of the literature in the field, point to

that high carbohydrate foods such as chocolate do have a 'feel good' effect. Moreover, Scholey and Owen (2013), in a

https://www.adelaide.edu.au/english-for-uni/essay-writing/

# **Academic essay writing template**

**Main body** – 80% of word count divided into paragraphs for each of your main points

Main body of essay separated into paragraphs

Each paragraph then needs to be structured:

- One key point per paragraph introduced in first sentence (Topic sentence)
- Key point then developed using evidence (references) e.g. supporting or arguing against a claim
- Concluding sentence sums up the paragraph
- Paragraphs lead logically from one to another

Top Tip: See handouts on writing good paragraphs, available in **HE Library** 

Useful link: http://

www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/

being-critical/

# **Academic essay writing template**

# Writing your conclusion - approximately 10% of word count

Re-state the guestion

e.g. This essay attempted to...

This essay has discussed the ......

The purpose of this essay was to.....

This study set out to ...

This paper has argued that ...

This essay has discussed the reasons for ...

- Summarise the key points no new material should be introduced
- Give final views

Useful link: http://
www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/
writing-conclusions/

# DEFINE

Use this paragraph structure when you need to define a concept, and demonstrate an understanding of how it relates to a particular context or discipline.

# **Topic Sentence -**

provide a simple definition of a concept

# Supporting Sentences -

provide more information through description, explanation, and examples; makes links between the concept and how it applies to a particular context or field

#### Conclusion -

not necessary; can transition to the next paragraph if related to the concept

#### Useful transitional words and phrases

for example, for instance, an illustration of this, another example, firstly, the first step, secondly, the second step, finally, the final step

# **DESCRIBE**

Use this paragraph structure if you are asked to provide information about something.

# Topic Sentence -

introduce the item to be described

# Supporting Sentences -

provide specific and detailed information about the item's characteristics and functions

#### Conclusion -

not necessary; can transition to the next paragraph if related to the item described

#### Useful transitional words and phrases

In the foreground, in the middle distance, in the background, in the far distance, next to, near, up, down, between, beneath, above, below, on top of, beneath, left/right, centre, front, back, middle, in the interior, on the exterior, on the inside, on the outside, surrounding

# **EXPLAIN**

Use this paragraph structure if you need to explain how something works or the steps in a process.

# Topic Sentence -

introduce what will be explained

#### Supporting Sentences -

explain each of the steps involved in the process, in the order that the steps are to be performed. Includes information about how something happens and why

# Conclusion -

provide a brief summary of the process

#### Useful transitional words and phrases

At first, initially, the first step, while, at the same time, the second/third/next step, after, next, finally, eventually, the final/last step.

# **ILLUSTRATE**

Use this paragraph structure when you need to clarify a particular idea by offering specific examples and showing how they relate to your main

#### **Topic Sentence -**

state a general idea

#### Supporting Sentences -

introduce examples to support the idea

#### Conclusion –

make a link between the examples and the general idea

# Useful transitional words and phrases

For example, for instance, an illustration of this, another example

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# Write with purpose: what do you want your paragraph to do?

# Purpose Paragraph Breakdown

# **ARGUE**

A paragraph can be used to argue for or against a point of view. Each paragraph should focus on developing one main point for or against the position.

# Topic Sentence -

introduce the argument and position for or against

# Supporting Sentences -

develop the reasons for your position and presents facts and examples to support this; address any counter-arguments

# Conclusion -

restate position

# Useful transitional words and phrases

For giving reasons: first, second, third, another, next, last, finally, because, since, for For counter-argument: but, however, of course, nevertheless, although, despite

For concluding: therefore, as a result, in conclusion, thus

# **CLASSIFY**

This paragraph structure can be used to organise information, items, or ideas into categories. The organisation of information will depend on your purpose and subject area.

# **Topic Sentence -**

Introduce the items being classified and/or the categories for classification

# Supporting Sentences -

provide more information about the items, and how their characteristics fit into a particular category

#### Conclusion -

repeat what classification the item or category belongs to

# Useful transitional words and phrases

Can be divided, can be classified, can be categorised the first/second/third

# **COMPARE or CONTRAST**

Use this paragraph structure if you need to examine similarities and differences. This paragraph structure is useful for literature reviews and reports.

#### **Topic Sentence -**

introduce the items to be compared or contrasted, noting similarity or difference

# Supporting Sentences -

identify, describe, and discuss any similarities or differences

#### Conclusion -

summarise and interpret the similarities and differences discussed

### Useful transitional words and phrases

For comparison: similar to, similarly, in the same way, like, equally, again, also, too For contrast: in contrast, on the other hand, different from, whereas, while, unlike, but, although, however, conversely, yet, unlike

# **Academic essay writing template**

# Referencing and Reference List – not included in word count

All the sources of information you have mentioned (referred to) must be briefly referenced in the correct format in your work (in text), and fully referenced in a **Reference List** at the end of your work.

Study Skills recommend identifying which referencing system you are using e.g. APA 6<sup>th</sup> or Harvard, printing it out in full and having it bound in the HE Library. It doesn't cost a lot and will help you throughout your course.

If you need help with referencing, workshops are available in the HE Library during the first academic term, or you can book an appointment with a **Study Skills advisor** –

www.studyskills@barnsley.ac.uk Tel: 01226 216 884

Remember – incorrect referencing could cost you valuable marks!

Useful link: http://

www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/
referring-to-sources/

# Unity

A paragraph should discuss only one idea.

i.e. do not discuss advantages and disadvantages of a theory – split these parts of the argument into two separate paragraphs.

- The opening sentence of paragraph should outline the main idea (topic sentence).
- Every supporting sentence should directly explain, refer back to, or build on the main idea.
- Use the final sentence to refer back to the topic sentence and/

# **CONSTRUCTING PARAGRAPHS**

# **Colour-coded paragraphs**

Follow the structural paragraph format detailed on the opposite page to construct your paragraph.

Using highlighter pens of different colours, highlight each line of your paragraph to indicate **Topic sentence**, **Explanation/definition**, **Evidence** and **Comment**, **Concluding Sentence**.

Have you constructed a 'unity' paragraph?

# The Topic sentence

States the main idea - a general statement

# **Explanation or Definition (optional)**

Clarifies any difficult or unclear terms in the Topic sentence

Alternatively: introduces the evidence

Supporting statements

# **Evidence**

Supports or develops the main idea with facts, examples, experiments, studies, arguments, quotes etc.

# Comment

- · Explains what the evidence means, & how it relates to your point.
- Supports or develops the evidence with analysis or further info e.g. opposing or contrasting points to broaden or develop the discussion
- If appropriate, mention other evidence (examples/studies/ experiments/interpretations) to widen the discussion

# **Concluding sentence**

- · States the implications or consequences of the paragraph
- · Shows the development of the argument
- Links back to the Topic sentence (may use same or similar key words from the Topic sentence)
- · Links forwards to the main idea of the next paragraph

https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/301/study-skills/writing/academic-writing/paragraph-flow-connectivity