

How do I know when to start a new paragraph?

You should start a new paragraph when:

- **When you begin a new idea or point.** New ideas should always start in new paragraphs. If you have an extended idea that spans multiple paragraphs, each new point within that idea should have its own paragraph.
- **To contrast information or ideas.** Separate paragraphs can serve to contrast sides in a debate, different points in an argument, or any other difference.
- **When your readers need a pause.** Breaks between paragraphs function as a short "break" for your readers—adding these in will help your writing be more readable. You would create a break if the paragraph becomes too long or the material is complex.
- **Whenever somebody different speaks.** When writing dialogue, each time a different person speaks, begin a new paragraph.
- **When you change settings, locations, time.** If you are writing a story, you begin a new paragraph if the location changes or time of day changes.

Paragraph research Template

Make the following boxes on a blank piece of lined paper and then fill in accordingly.

Write here what the topic of your paragraph will be OR the main idea that you are supposed to be writing about.

Write a claim that supports what you say the purpose or main idea of the paragraph is in this box.

Proof to support your claim. Write in here an example from your source (movie, tv show, book, magazine, etc...) to prove the claim you made.

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Once you have filled in the boxes you are ready to begin writing your paragraph. Follow the steps below to complete your paragraph.

Paragraph Structure

Step 1 – Topic Sentence – Introduce what you are going to write about and state your opinion if the paragraph asks you to take a side. (one sentence)

Step 2 – Elaboration – you must assume your reader doesn't know anything about what you are going to write about. So, you must provide a brief background to what you said this paragraph will be about. Give some history or provide a quick summary or biography. (2 – 3 Sentences)

Step 3 – Claim – use one of your claims from your rough notes. (1 – 2 sentences)

Step 4 – Proof/support – use the example from your rough notes that supports the claim you just made.

Step 5 – Explain the relevancy. Tell the reader how the claim you made, and the proof you have just given prove what you said this paragraph would be about in your topic sentence. Ask your self, “So what? What does what I've just written have to do with the purpose of this paragraph?” Your answer to this question is what you write here. (1 – 2 sentences)

Step 6 – Write your other claim.

Step 7 – Support it with the corresponding example from your rough notes.

Step 8 – Explain the relevancy. Like you did with the previous example.

Step 9 – Conclude. In one sentence sum up all you've said and connect it to the purpose of the paragraph...what you said in the topic sentence. Use concluding words such as **Thus, Hence, and Therefore.**