

ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION INFO SHEET

Academic Writing: Paragraph structure (AW: PS)

Practice using a paragraph graphic organiser.

Identify the links between topic sentences and the rest of the paragraph.

See **Info Sheets** on paragraph structures and essay structure.

The paragraph graphic organiser is a way of organising your thinking into topic sentence ideas, body sections and concluding sentence areas. Using a blank one of these may assist you to plan out your ideas before developing a draft.

As a plan the prove it section would not complete sentences: just dot points with the references included even as a code.

Paragraph graphic organiser

Say it or topic sentence: What is the main idea of the paragraph? What is it going to be about?

Explain it Sometimes in our writing, a key word or phrase used in the topic sentence needs explaining or defining. This is optional and the writer will decide whether this is necessary.

Prove it or supporting information sentences with referencing

- sentences that develop the main idea
 - sentences that provide evidence about the main idea
 - sentences that prove the main idea
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Clinch it or concluding/summary sentence: A sentence to sum up the evidence as it relates to the topic sentence

Your turn

Look at the draft paragraph in the graphic organiser following and locate the **key words** in the say it (topic sentence) section that present the main idea in the paragraph. With a highlighter, go through the model and identify:

1. the prove it points that **link to the statement or main idea** shown in the topic sentence
2. the key words used to **summarise the evidence** provided in the clinch it section.

Paragraph draft

Say it:

At present, the **Federal** and **State Governments** are **introducing** new **community** based **programs** to combat the **childhood obesity** epidemic.

Prove it:

In 2004 a new health awareness package called *Building a Healthy, Active Australia* was introduced. This focuses on addressing increasing inactivity and poor eating habits among Australian children (Commonwealth of Australia, 2005, p. 1 of 4). The *Go for 2 fruit and 5 veg* campaign is a part of this initiative and was launched in April 2005. The campaign targets parents and carers and its two key objectives are to raise awareness and provide information to emphasise the need of a balanced diet to promote good health in children (Commonwealth of Australia, 2005, p. 1 of 4). The Queensland Government has also made a response to the childhood obesity dilemma with the introduction of the Kids on Track program. This program is based on the Gold Coast and examines the impact of parent intervention and the effect it has on obese children in the 3 – 10 years age bracket, who have no medical reason for their condition. The aim is to support parents through nutrition, physical activity and family behavioural change to address the health issues of their child. A medical team comprising of a Paediatrician, Dietician, Physiotherapist and a Psychologist head the program and for those families who participate; there is no cost incurred (Queensland Government, 2005, p. 1 of 2). The effectiveness of this program will determine if it will be used by other Queensland Health Service districts.

Clinch it:

The Commonwealth and State Governments have taken the first step towards combating the incidence of childhood obesity with support for programs that educate families about healthier eating and behaviours.

Your turn again

Now make your own set of graphic organisers and use them to plan your paragraphs.

1. Use the essay plan first to get an overview.
 2. You can attempt a draft of the full concluding sentence at this point.
 3. The prove it section would not be complete sentences; just dot points with the references included (Harvard shown above). Using the *Five W and H questions* (who, what, when, where, why and how), or the cause and effect or problems and solutions structures can help to expand these ideas.
- You can attempt a draft of the full concluding sentence at this point.