

Andrea McKenzie
The Writing Centre

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Organizing Your Draft

Or
I've written my heart out
WHAT DO I DO NOW???

ORGANIZING

YOUR

DRAFT



The Writing Centre

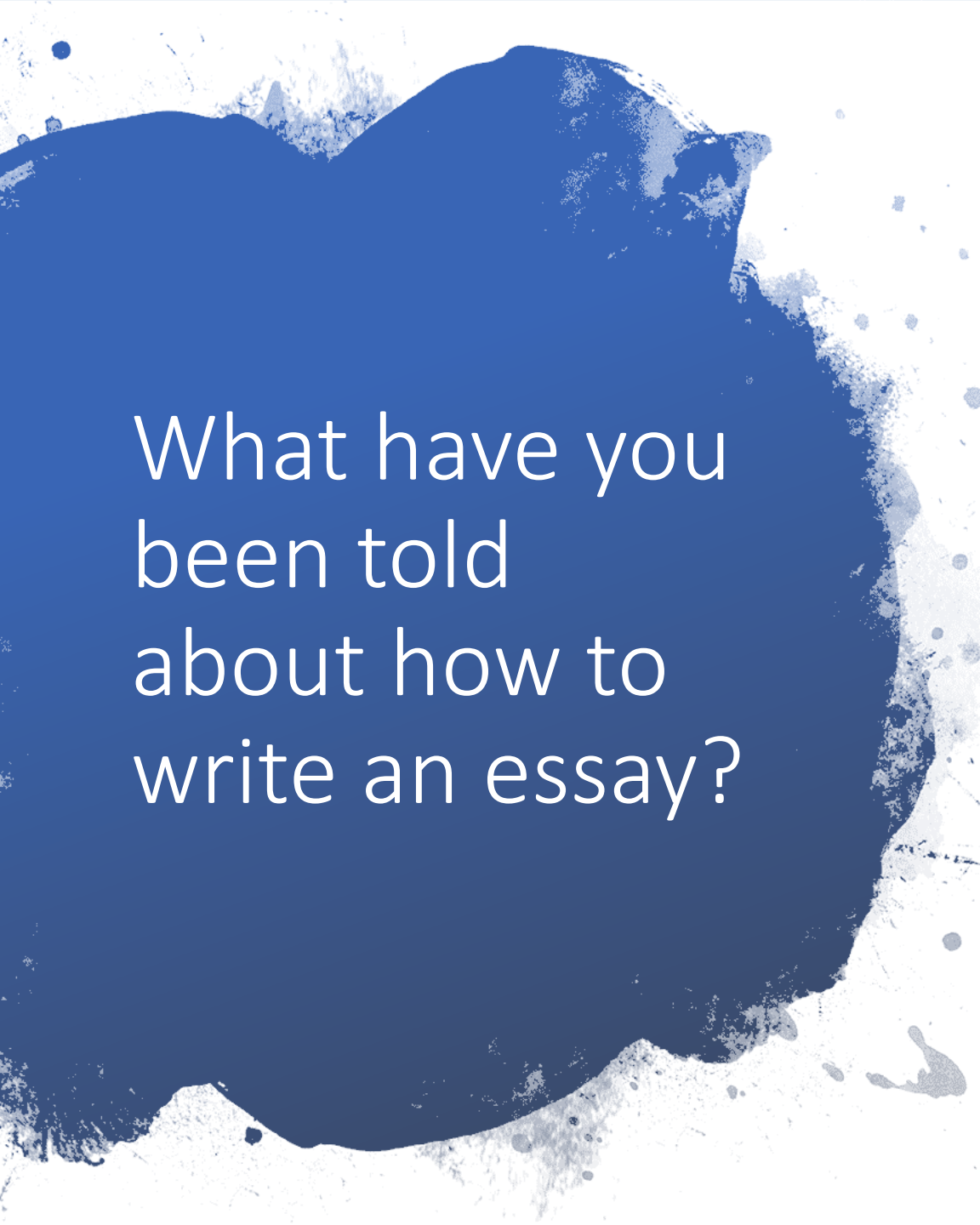
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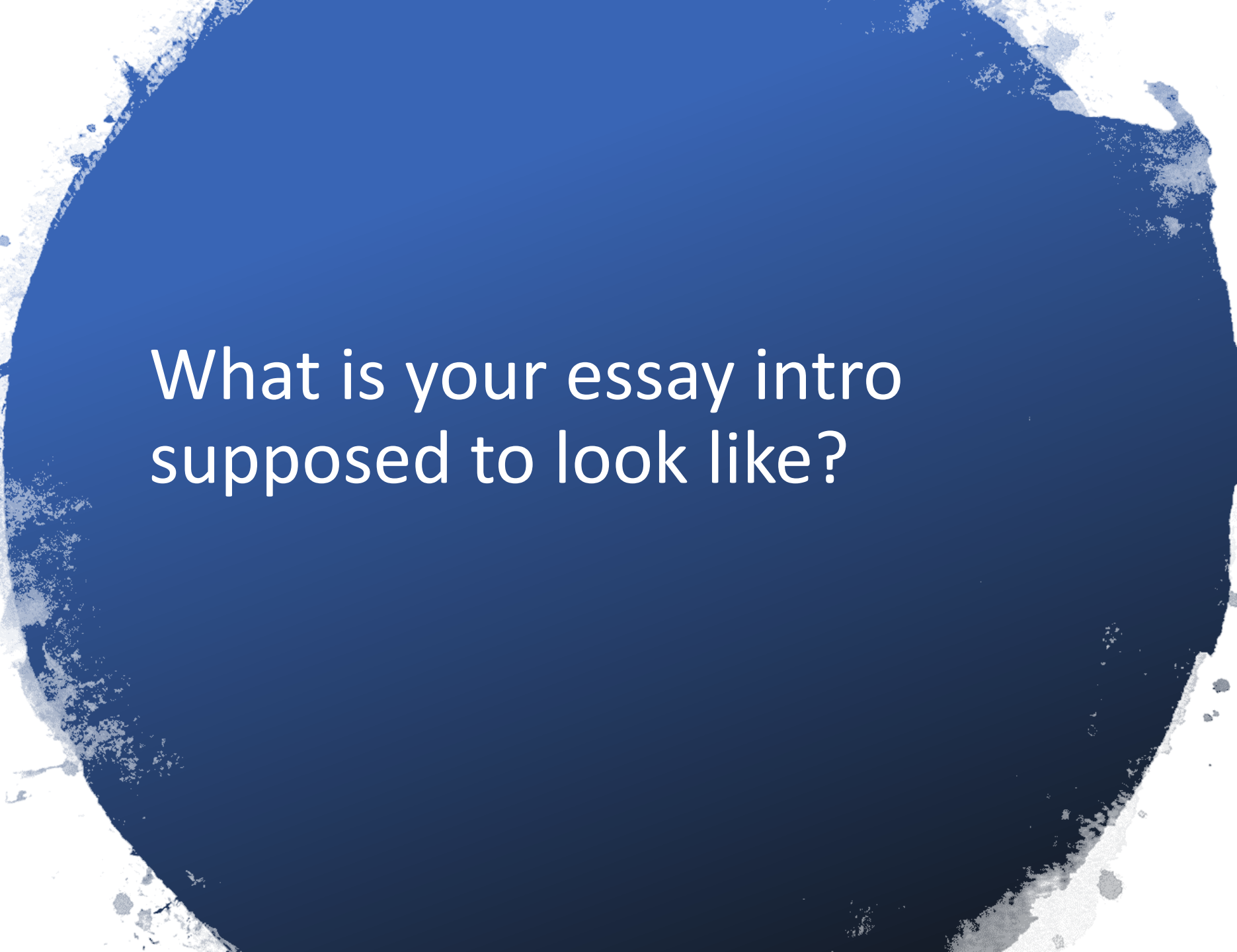
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What have you
been told
about how to
write an essay?

- <https://jamboard.google.com/d/1XDeWPpeMwNpoQxhnErRlr8sjv226aez-7bFmsqguq8M/edit?usp=sharing>



What is your essay intro
supposed to look like?

Q: What were the central causes of the Gulf War?

PART (AND ONLY PART) OF AN INTRO

In this essay I will investigate the central causes of the Gulf War.

PURPOSE

While Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was pointed to as the central cause of the Gulf War by political leaders at the time, it is evident that America's animosity towards Iraq throughout the Cold War ultimately tipped the scale toward conflict.

THESIS STATEMENT

In this paper, I explain the event that instigated the declaration of the Gulf War, I reveal that this spark was so catching by illuminating the animosity between the US and Iraq throughout the Cold War and over the Israel-Palestine question, and, finally, I point to political speeches and military strategies that are particularly revealing of the significance of this tense relationship for the cause of war.

ROADMAP TO MIDDLE OF PAPER

You probably start writing with these:

The prof's question: What were the central causes of the Gulf War?

Your purpose:

In this essay I will investigate the central causes of the Gulf War.

But you want to arrive here:

Thesis statement and roadmap:

While Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was pointed to as the central cause of the Gulf War by political leaders at the time, it is evident that America's animosity towards Iraq throughout the Cold War ultimately tipped the scale toward conflict.

In this paper, I explain the event that instigated the declaration of the Gulf War, I reveal that this spark was so catching by illuminating the animosity between the US and Iraq throughout the Cold War and over the Israel-Palestine question, and, finally, I point to political speeches and military strategies that are particularly revealing of the significance of this tense relationship for the cause of war.

Where do you find the thesis and roadmap?

- Thesis: usually in the last paragraph of your draft
- Roadmap: in the structure you set up in the middle of your essay
- REVISE FOR FLOW AND ORGANIZATION, THEN REWRITE YOUR INTRODUCTION, including a revised thesis

ORDER AND FLOW OF THE MIDDLE

- Must find that strong central idea, argument, or answer to the question FIRST
- Search your draft, especially towards the end
- WHAT HAVE YOU DISCOVERED? WHAT IS YOUR ANSWER TO THE QUESTION? WHAT IS YOUR POSITION NOW THAT YOU'VE EXPLORED THE EVIDENCE?


- **Q: Compare motherhood in Author1 and Author2.**
- **Your original answer:** Keats' depiction of motherhood in "poem" contrasts starkly with James' in "novel". While Author1 depicts motherhood as nostalgic mother earth type, Author2's third-wave depiction involves...
- **What you find in your draft essay:**
- Author1's depiction of motherhood puts the romantic nostalgic vision of motherhood into a regressive box, whereas Author2's third-wave depiction frees mothers to discover their feminist identities

Your central idea for checking flow and structure would be:


Author1's depiction of motherhood puts the romantic nostalgic vision of motherhood into a regressive box, whereas Author2's third-wave depiction frees mothers to discover their feminist identities

Strategies to use: Check the consistency of your answer


Highlight the thesis or your answer to your question in the beginning of your paper



Highlight your conclusions – also the answer to your question – at the end of your paper



DO THEY MATCH? That is, do you give the same answer in both places?



If not, revise your introduction so that your thesis statement matches your closing conclusions

Make a reverse outline

Describe the main content of each paragraph in the middle of your paper in a short phrase – two or three words

Can't do it? If paragraphs are long, break them up by topic and try again

On a blank screen or page, copy your thesis or research question

Underneath, type or write in the list of phrases you used to describe each of your middle paragraphs

First question: does your middle cover each of the concepts you included in your thesis statement? If not, make a note to fill in the gap

An example (Jonathan Clodman's essay)

- The **research question** Jonathan Clodman asked:
- “How did differences in news coverage between the 2015 CUPE strike and the 2015 public school teachers’ strike contribute to different public perspectives of the incidents themselves?”
- A potential **thesis statement** from the beginning of such a paper (answer to the question):
- As I argue, textual and visual coverage of the CUPE strike included Kelloway et. al’s three elements of “perceived injustice, identification, and perceived instrumentality,” and thus led to favourable public opinion of this strike. In contrast, coverage of the ETFO strike lacked these elements and focused mostly on union demands and the impact of the strike on children and parents, so did not garner public sympathy.

A Reverse Outline for the middle of this essay, first draft

Reverse outline of the middle of the essay:

- Methods – analysis methods, news orgs
- CUPE: labour issues covered
- ETFO: labour issues omitted
- ETFO: what teachers would and would not do
- Strategic benefits
- ETFO: who gets to speak
- ETFO: children's images
- ETFO: bosses' images
- ETFO: teachers' images
- CUPE: who gets to speak
- CUPE: images of solidarity

What's missing?

What seems like a digression?

What seems to be out of order

What seems like repetition?

What you might have noticed

- The thesis names CUPE first, ETFO second, but the middle of the paper doesn't always follow that order.
- There's a long section on ETFO in the middle.
- The ETFO paragraph about "who gets to speak" comes quite early, but the CUPE paragraph comes near the end.
- The ETFO has three paragraphs about images, and the CUPE single paragraph is out of order, placed right at the end of the middle.
- "Strategic benefits" seems out of place, especially given the question and thesis. Is this paragraph relevant?
- "Kellerman et. al" is named in the thesis statement, but never explained.

A revised order might be:

- Methods – analysis methods, news orgs
- Kellerman et. al: explanation and definition
- CUPE: labour issues covered
- ETFO: labour issues omitted; lists of work to order
- CUPE: who gets to speak
- ETFO: who gets to speak
- CUPE: images of solidarity
- ETFO: images of fragmentation, rich bosses
- Strategic benefits of positive coverage
- Impact on the two unions

Other strategies to check for structure

- **Concept mapping: draw your essay or report**
 - Put your central idea in the middle
 - Place each new point in relation to the central idea and to the other points
- **Talk aloud**
 - Explain your thesis or central idea and points to someone else. Does the order of your explanation make sense? Is it difficult to explain in the order you've written it? Revise accordingly
- **For longer papers, try sectioning:**
 - Create "headings" to cover your major points
 - Group your smaller points under the headings.
 - Does everything belong? Is anything left out? Is the written order working?
 - Revise accordingly

A dark, irregular ink blot with splatters on a white background. The blot is roughly circular but has jagged, feathered edges. It is surrounded by numerous small, dark splatters of varying sizes, some of which are elongated and trail off, suggesting a liquid being thrown or splashed. The overall effect is that of a fresh ink spill on a clean white surface.

Paragraphing

Paragraphs as storytelling

- Unity = each paragraph expresses one idea
- Topic sentence = usually the first sentence in academic writing, but appears anywhere in professional writing
 - When used first, tells us what to expect in the paragraph
 - What's this story about?
- Next sentences develop the story
- Middle provides evidence
- Rest of the paragraph explains the meaning of that evidence in relation to the thesis or central idea

What is evidence? Some examples

- An example or illustration, including quotes from literature
- Data (facts, statistics, evidence, details, and others)
- Testimony (what other people say such as quotes and paraphrases)
- An anecdote or story
- Many other types of evidence

SHOW US, DON'T JUST TELL US

TOPIC	Despite the focus on hard skills, it appears that the biggest benefit of going to university is not necessarily what you learn, but the people you meet there and the networks that you create.
EVIDENCE	Although graduates often list discipline-orientated goals when asked what their main reason is for enrolling at university, ultimately many graduates go on to careers and professions unrelated to their degree program (Hopkins & Bylander 2013; Raskovich 2003; Smith 1999).
ANALYSIS	So what kind of transferrable skills do students carry over from their study into their career? Raskovich (2003, p. 217) suggests that the key relationships and networks created by students at university provide useful professional contacts for the future. This also assists in the development of the interpersonal communication skills sought by employers.
CONCLUSION	Student proficiency in a range of digital skills that facilitate online academic, professional and social networks are also important elements in the bigger picture of graduate communication skills.

Different
types of
paragraph
have
different
purposes

- define terms
- compare and contrast
- evaluate causes and reasons
- examine effects and consequences
- analyze the topic
- describe the topic
- offer a chronology of an event (time segments)

The classic
analytic
paragraph:
the
“sandwich”

- State the topic of your paragraph; what you’re going to show us
- SHOW US THE EVIDENCE or describe it (DESCRIPTION)
- Explain what the evidence MEANS (ANALYSIS)
- Tell us what you’ve shown us

A sample paragraph (Jonathan Clodman)

First two sentences: Tells us what Jonathan is about to show us

Lastly, coverage for these two incidents of job action differed in the featuring of individual faces and stories. For the CUPE strike, there was a demonstrated emphasis on what one reporter called the “faces of the . . . picket line” (Ngabo). His piece on the York University picket line, for example, described detailed stories of some of those affected by the strike,

First part of the middle: SHOWS US THE EVIDENCE

such as sociology PhD candidate Louise Birdsell Bauer’s perspective on the “exorbitantly high rent in Toronto” to social work student Emily Irwin “braving the cold” because “the leaders are turning the university into a corporation” (Ngabo). Ngabo’s article is just one example. Virtually every article written about the strike featured a photo, sometimes even a video, showing picketers standing in the cold together in solidarity (Brown, Chiose, Connor, Strapagiel).

Second part of the middle: TELLS US WHAT THE EVIDENCE MEANS

With the camera looking down at the crowds of picketers, photojournalists almost romanticized the strike as the noble plight of the underdogs, the common people set against the rich and powerful university (Brown “Both sides”, Levinson King “Why this”, Leslie). Even the union leader was only seen this way amid a crowd of picketers (Leslie). The faces and stories of the picketers gave a unified face and story to the event, one with which audiences could empathize.

The closing sentence: Gives a CONCLUSION about the impact of the evidence; the ARGUMENT

Even those readers far removed from the York University campus and unaware of the issues at the bargaining table could feel compassion for those seen huddling to stay warm in the snow and wind.

Typical evidence/analysis paragraphs

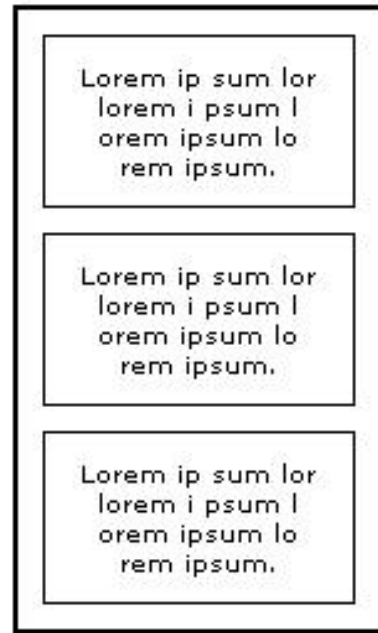
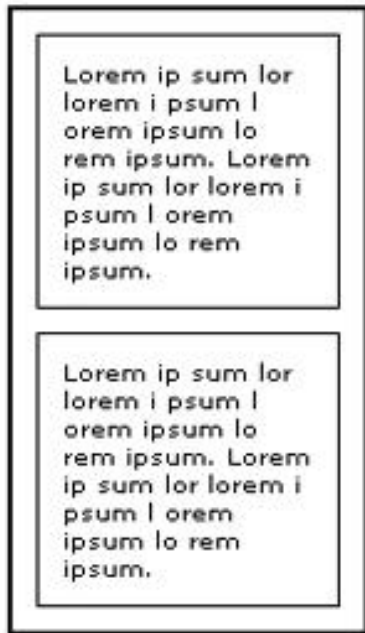
- Every paragraph in the middle of your paper that makes a point should include:
 - An opening statement of the point about to be made
 - Cited evidence to support that point
 - A shift to analysis, to what that evidence **MEANS** in relation to your thesis
 - A closing sentence that summarizes the point and its impact, again in relation to your thesis.

Checking paragraph development

- Myth: Every paragraph should be exactly the same length
- Reality: Paragraphs can vary in length, but watch for very short and very long ones
- Reality: Paragraphs are visual markers that tell readers when you're changing to a new point or topic

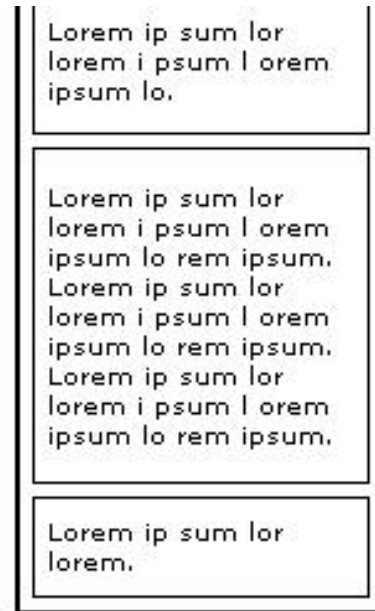
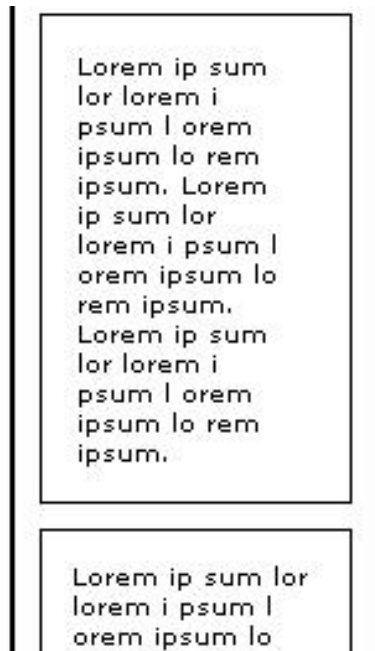
- Short ones: may be undeveloped, missing evidence + analysis
- Long (more than $\frac{3}{4}$ page): may contain more than one topic and need breaking up

Balanced paragraphs look like either one of these two sets:



- Note that though you can't read the text, you can see the length of the paragraphs in each of these two essays.
- Paragraphs don't have to be exactly the same length, but you shouldn't see really long ones followed by really short ones
- Use your word processor's Zoom function to see this type of image of your essay.

Unbalanced paragraphs look like this: very long, very short



- The long paragraphs probably need breaking up
- The very short paragraphs need development. They're probably missing evidence or explanation of what the evidence means

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