Course Learning Outcomes for Unit IV

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate unity within paragraphs.
2. Compose effective topic sentences for their paragraphs.
3. Develop adequate paragraphs.
4. Demonstrate coherence within their writing.
5. Create a powerful and solid conclusion.

Reading Assignment


Chapter 5: Paragraphs

Unit Lesson

Now that you have established how to write with emphasis, it is time for you to begin portraying it through the first draft of your final essay. Keep in mind, this is just a draft so you are not expecting to be perfect; rather, this is merely the basis from which you are going to work. However, in this draft, you will complete an introduction with a solid thesis statement, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Although this may seem tedious and a treacherous assignment, you can do it. You just need to get over that initial fear. We will go back and revise later.

In order to have a powerful paragraph, it must only follow one topic. In other words, the paragraph must be unified. You will lose your readers if the sentences within your paragraph jump from one idea to another. Although you will see this advice many times throughout the course, the more focused you are, the better. Nothing is more powerful than a clear, focused, and concise paragraph and essay. You do not want your audience to be questioning anything.

One way to help you achieve focus and coherence within your paragraph is to have a solid topic sentence. Usually this is the first sentence of the paragraph. It acts as a mini thesis statement that is aimed for the paragraph rather than a whole paper. Make this topic sentence reflect back on your original thesis statement, and then the rest of your paragraph will naturally follow the thesis as well. For example, if you were to have a thesis statement that read, “The musical *Wicked* demonstrates that society condemns those who are misunderstood,” then you could have a body paragraph with the following topic sentence: “The protagonist, Elphaba, is bullied because of the hue of her skin.” Within the paragraph, you would give instances where this happens and explain why groups of people dislike those who portray anything different than what is expected. The paragraph must follow that topic sentence, and that topic sentence must follow that main thesis.

Even though the thoughts you carry within your head make perfect sense to you, they may not always translate onto paper. That is why it is imperative to elaborate on your statements rather than just assuming that your audience will understand. While your paragraphs should not be overly lengthy, they should have just the right amount of detail to satisfy your reader.

When you add these details, coherence will usually follow. You need your paper to be coherent to give the sentences style and readability. A paper without coherence will be choppy, unattached, and a hassle for your reader to get through. However, if you add transitional phrases and words, such as *likewise, however, even though*, and as *a result*, the paper will flow much smoother, and it will be much more connected. Just make
sure to elaborate on your ideas and connect your sentences and paragraphs together so that they all form an interwoven quilt rather than a pile of scraps.

Finally, your paper must end with a powerful conclusion. Most often in your conclusion, you sum up the case you have just made. What were the major claims you made throughout the paper? Why do they all point towards your thesis statement? Make sure that in this paragraph, your reader is not left questioning whether they should side with you. Remember, you are the expert! Show them that you are right and an authority on the subject! Leave your reader awed by what you have just presented him or her with.

Okay, it is time for you to get writing. Again, this is just going to be a first draft so you are not expected to be perfect, and remember, have some fun. Do not make this a chore but rather get excited about it! Good luck!

Click here to view an interactive lesson on composing body paragraphs.

Click here to view an interactive lesson on writing an effective conclusion.

**Suggested Reading**

Using the Waldorf Online Library, locate the following articles:


**Learning Activities (Non-Graded)**

For some extra practice, complete the following exercises in *Strategies for Successful Writing: A Rhetoric, Research Guide, Reader, and Handbook*:

**Chapter 5:** Paragraphs, pp. 84, 86, 88, 89, 93, 95, 96, 99, 102

Non-graded Learning Activities are provided to aid students in their course of study. You do not have to submit them. If you have questions, contact your instructor for further guidance and information.