

NAME: _____

BODY PARAGRAPHS ARE LIKE

Courses (in a Meal)

OBJECTIVE:

I can describe the purpose and characteristics of an essay's body paragraph.

At this point...

...in a meal, you've given the diners menus that promise a certain dish, and possibly a free sample or photograph of what it's supposed to look like.

...in an essay, you've made a big claim or thesis statement and given a preview of the essay in the introduction paragraph.

Now, it's time to give the people what they ordered and keep your promise!



WHY DO WE NEED BODY PARAGRAPHS?

The body paragraphs are the true meal, the part where you make or break the essay. Even if you did a great job stating an opinion in the introduction, you still need to prove those big ideas you mentioned.

Body paragraphs should do two things:

- 1. Match the thesis statement (the promise):** If you said you were going to deliver a double cheeseburger, then bring it to the table!
 - a. Example: If you stated in the thesis that cheetahs are the most dangerous animal in the wild today, then your body paragraphs need to stay focused on keywords like cheetah, danger, wild, today/ 21st century, etc.
 - b. Don't go on a completely unrelated detour that strays too far from what the thesis statement PROMISED you would discuss.
- 2. Make a new point (make a balanced plate):** If you promised a dinner, don't only give three bread rolls; people expect a variety of food on the plate, like an entrée, side dishes, and more!
 - a. Example: In your three body paragraphs, don't restate the same reasons three times. (Don't give us three different paragraphs that only talk about how fast cheetahs are. It will get boring.) Essay readers expect a variety of reasons/ proof for your topic.
 - b. Each new body paragraph should bring up a new, different point about the topic that will help prove that thesis statement.

BUT WHY DO I HAVE TO WRITE (AT LEAST) 3 OF THEM?

Have you ever noticed that a lot of meals work in threes?

- Larger, fancier meals often have at LEAST three courses: bread, appetizer, soup or salad, and THEN a full dinner plate!
- Even the simpler meals have more than one food type on the plate: a meat or entrée and multiple side dishes (like vegetables, starches and carbs, etc.)
- Fast food usually works in trios: burger, fries, and a drink!

If a healthy, balanced meal has variety, then shouldn't your essay, too?



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BODY PARAGRAPHS ARE LIKE *Courses (in a Meal)*

LET'S REVIEW: THE FORMULA FOR BODY PARAGRAPHS

Although some teachers and writers HATE feeling restricted by "boring" formulas, there are some things that we expect to see in the body paragraphs of academic essays:

1. A topic sentence: ONE sentence that CLEARLY states what the topic will be about (and ideally, how it connects to the thesis statement).

2. Middle sentences: a combination of reasons, evidence/facts, and explanations or analysis that PROVE the topic sentence you just listed in a super-focused way. (We will discuss evidence later.)

3. Concluding sentence*: Either restate the topic sentence, summarize the paragraph you just wrote, or start to bridge to the next topic. (Ideally, you would also list a transition sentence after or with the concluding sentence, but we are talking about that in another lesson too.)

Let's Practice: Write an example body paragraph in the space below for your current essay. Use the checklist on the left to make sure you've included everything!

COPY your thesis statement here so you don't lose focus or forget to prove it.

Does my paragraph...

- Have a focused topic sentence that makes a new point about the thesis?
- Have multiple sentence of reasons and evidence that prove the topic sentence?
- Ended with a conclusion of that paragraph and/or a transition leading into the next one?



EXIT TICKET:

What is a body paragraph supposed to do? Explain in your own words.