**Class 9: Hamburger Paragraph Structure**

1. **Learning Objectives**

Learners should be able to:

1. Write in paragraphs in English
2. Understand that the first sentence or topic sentence in a paragraph is the main idea.
3. **Rationale**

Paragraphs are building blocks of arguments. Paragraphing makes reading easier1-3. Readers recognize paragraphs either by a white line between two condensed blocks or texts or by a right indentation at the beginning of a paragraph. They know that the first or topic sentence is the main idea and the last or concluding sentence is the main idea restated. In time constraint setting, they won’t read inside the paragraphs.

1. **Activities**

**Activity 1**

A hamburger paragraph has three parts:

1. The introduction (top bun), which is the main idea.
2. The internal or supporting information (the filling), which may have many supporting ideas with examples and evidences.
3. The conclusion (bottom bun), which is the main idea restated based on supporting ideas.

**Example 1a**:

**Main idea:** English is extremely important in scientific communication.

**Supporting idea 1:** International meetings are held in English with/out translation.

* + *Explain, give evidence and examples*

**Supporting idea 2:** The best paperback and online books are written in English.

* + *Explain, give evidence and examples*

**Supporting idea 3:** Major journals and funding agencies use only English.

* + *Explain, give evidence and examples*

**Main idea:** Nowadays, scientists easily access information and communicate with peers, journals and research funding agencies in English.

**Example 1b:**

**“English is extremely important in scientific communication**. International meetings are held in English with/out translation. The best paperback and online books are written in English. Major journals and funding agencies use only English. **Nowadays, scientists easily access information and communicate with peers, journals and research funding agencies in English.** “

In these examples 1a and 1b, you have only five (5) simple sentences. Each sentence adds a new complete ideas, but these ideas are unrelated. Academic and manuscript writing are all about making relationships between sentences/concepts to build up arguments, to interpret data and to draw conclusions.

As a nonnative English speaking scientist, the hamburger paragraph can serve as a nice, quick, visual introduction to paragraphing, though. In the reality, paragraphs are not structured as hamburgers in academic and manuscript writing. Still, the idea of a *paragraph* is built around these three concepts: unit, coherence, and emphasis of a paragraph. Unity is **e**verything in a paragraph is connected, related, and relevant. Coherence isparagraphs must be clear, understandable, and easily read. Emphasis is the positing of the important information. In other words, the most important idea or main idea is placed where it will be most visible—usually in the first sentence and re-emphasized or summarized in the final sentence of the paragraph4,5.

It is important to regroup your writing in paragraphs. Sentences that are related to each other to make a point are brought together to form a paragraph. A paragraph is usually 3-5 sentences minimum up to 200-300 words. The average sentence length is between 15–20 words6.Breaking your condensed text into paragraphs effectively and efficiently requires time, skill and practice. As a simple tip, form your paragraph with sentences that address the same point. Watch for redundancies and combine sentences for concision. Have the two most important information as the topic and concluding sentences of each paragraph.

1. **Evaluation**
2. What is the structure of a hamburger paragraph?
3. Where are the most important information in a paragraph?
4. **References**
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# University of Hull. Writing academically: Paragraph structure. Available at <https://libguides.hull.ac.uk/writing/paras> updated on May 19, 2022 12:25 PM and consulted on June 8, 2023.