



Paragraph Writing—English 67 and 68

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Instructor: _____ Course: _____

IMPORTANT NOTE: All the activities (4) in this DLA must be completed in their entirety before meeting with a tutor and receiving credit. Where indicated, complete your work on this sheet. If your instructor wants evidence of this completed DLA, return this form to him or her with the tutor's signature included.

Objective: Many student writers often find that constructing solid, effective body paragraphs is a difficult process. Many wonder what should be in in a body paragraph and where this information should go. To simplify, a paragraph should contain four major parts (MEAL):

- The topic sentence (**M**ain point)
- The supporting sentences (**E**vidence and **A**nalyses)
- The concluding/transitional sentence (**L**ink back to thesis)

In this activity, you will learn and practice a process you can use to construct effective paragraphs. Note: Introduction and conclusion paragraphs are organized differently. For help on composing these other types of paragraphs, please refer to the introductions and/or conclusions DLAs.

Activities (approximately one hour): This self-directed activity familiarizes you with crafting an effective paragraph through handouts and other independent activities and will culminate in meeting with a tutor to review the activity. Check off each box once you have completed the activity.

- 1. Before proceeding, please review the attached handout “Paragraphing: The MEAL Plan.”
- 2. Read the following introductory paragraph; then underline and label the different elements of the paragraph: the topic sentence (**M** for main point), the evidence (**E** for supporting points to the topic sentence), the analysis (**A** which explains the supporting points with more detail), and finally the concluding sentence (**L** which links back to the main point of the paragraph—the thesis).

Narcolepsy: A Misunderstood Problem

Narcolepsy, a disorder that causes people to fall asleep suddenly and uncontrollably, is often misunderstood. Narcoleptics may be in the middle of a meal or a conversation or almost any other activity, and they just nod off, usually only for a minute or so. Because most of us associate falling asleep with boredom or a lack of interest, people are often very offended when someone falls asleep in the middle of something. We do not look kindly of someone whose face falls into his or her plate during a dinner conversation, for example. Students with narcolepsy are often criticized, or even ridiculed, for falling asleep in the middle of a class. On the job, narcolepsy can be even more of a problem. No one looks favorably on an employee who falls asleep in the middle of an important meeting or is found sleeping on the job. However, narcoleptic shave no

control over this disorder; when they suddenly fall asleep, it is not from boredom, rudeness, or lack of a good night's sleep. (Anker 74)

3. Choose **ONE** of the four topics below and write a paragraph on a separate sheet of paper. When writing, make sure to include the MEAL elements in the paragraph—the topic sentence (M), evidence (E) and analysis (A), and a concluding sentence (L).
1. Discuss how the meaning of love differs from person to person.
 2. Discuss the reasons people form cliques or the effects of cliques on those inside and outside the group.
 3. Discuss the reasons for the growing population of homeless in the U.S.
 4. Analyze the effects of parental expectations on you or another person.
- 4a. Locate an essay you have previously written or one you are presently working on and identify the previously-mentioned elements of a paragraph (MEAL). If you are missing any or all of the four pieces or are unhappy with any part of your paragraph, revise it to include the different tenets of a paragraph. Bring your essay with the added identifying marks and revisions with you to the tutoring session.

If you do not have your own essay to work with, please complete the supplemental activity below (4b).

- 4b. Read the following sample paragraph. Rewrite it on the sheet of paper you used to draft the earlier paragraph (3). When you revise, first figure which of the elements need revision. Then revise accordingly making sure the revision contains the parts of MEAL. Be prepared to tell your tutor both what you thought needed revision and why you revised it.

Many students set goals for themselves when they enter college. They want to pass with high grades and get into good colleges. Students do not know how to get these good grades. They will cram for exams hours before the test and complete assignments just in the nick of time.

5. **Review:** Sign-up to see a tutor on the “DLA Walk-in” list (located in the computer lab). During your session with a tutor, review steps 1-4 from above to determine whether all four elements of a paragraph (MEAL) are effectively used. Explain the choices you have made for each section. You and the tutor may then discuss any alternative strategies for each.

Student's signature: _____ Date: _____

Tutor's signature: _____ Date: _____

(Additional resources: “Tips for Better Paragraphs: The ‘Burger’ Approach” handout)

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