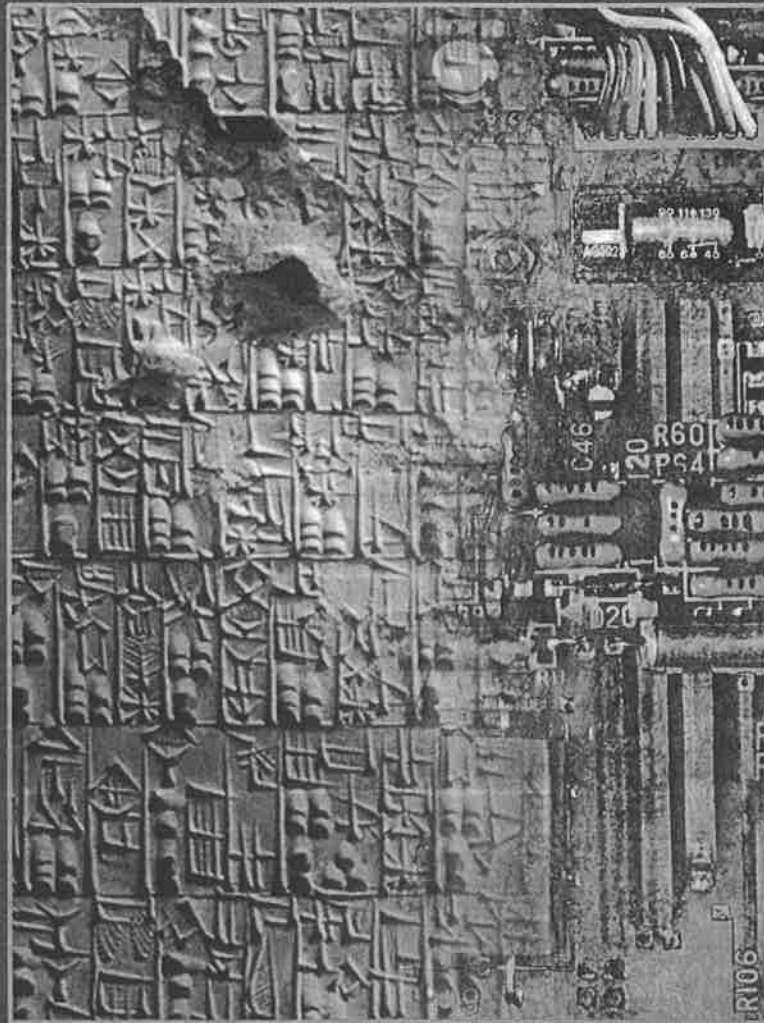


The Longman Academic Writing Series

Level
4

Writing Academic English

FOURTH EDITION



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PEARSON
Longman

MODEL**Paragraph
Structure****Gold**

¹Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics. ²First of all, gold has a lustrous¹ beauty that is resistant to corrosion.² ³Therefore, it is suitable for jewelry, coins, and ornamental purposes. ⁴Gold never needs to be polished and will remain beautiful forever. ⁵For example, a Macedonian coin remains as untarnished³ today as the day it was made 25 centuries ago. ⁶Another important characteristic of gold is its usefulness to industry and science. ⁷For many years, it has been used in hundreds of industrial applications, such as photography and dentistry. ⁸The most recent use of gold is in astronauts' suits. ⁹Astronauts wear gold-plated heat shields for protection when they go outside spaceships in space. ¹⁰In conclusion, gold is treasured not only for its beauty but also for its utility.

Writing Technique Questions

1. What is the topic of the paragraph?
2. What two main points does the writer make about the topic?
3. In which two sentences does the writer say that there are two main points?
4. What examples does the writer use to support each point?

The Three Parts of a Paragraph

All paragraphs have a **topic sentence** and **supporting sentences**, and some paragraphs also have a **concluding sentence**.

The **topic sentence** states the main idea of the paragraph. It not only names the topic of the paragraph, but it also limits the topic to one specific area that can be discussed completely in the space of a single paragraph. The part of the topic sentence that announces the specific area to be discussed is called the **controlling idea**. Notice how the topic sentence of the model states both the topic and the controlling idea:

TOPIC
CONTROLLING IDEA

Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics.

Supporting sentences develop the topic sentence. That is, they explain or prove the topic sentence by giving more information about it. Following are some of the supporting sentences that explain the topic sentence about gold.

First of all, gold has a lustrous beauty that is resistant to corrosion.

For example, a Macedonian coin remains as untarnished today as the day it was made 25 centuries ago.

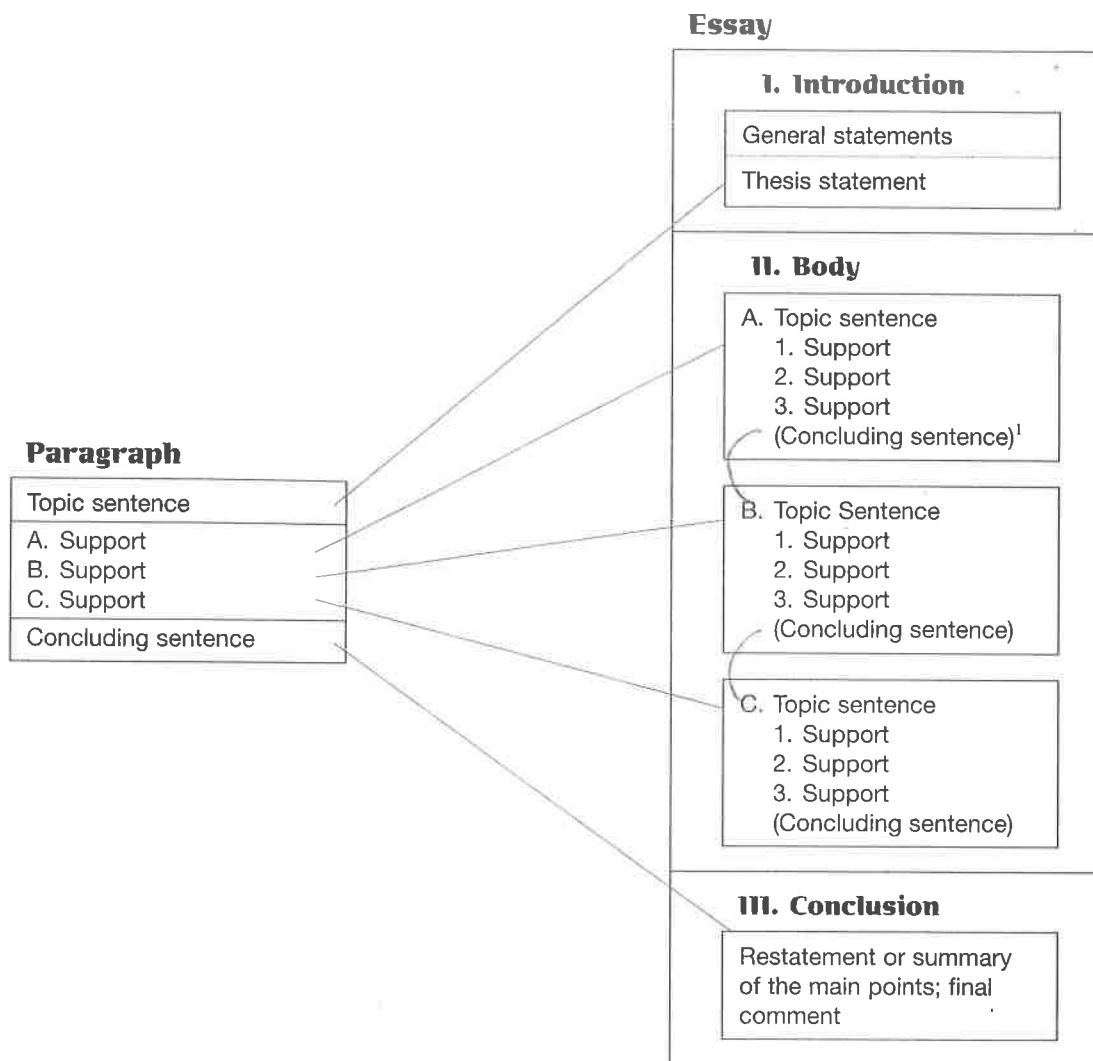
Another important characteristic of gold is its usefulness to industry and science.

The most recent use of gold is in astronauts' suits.

¹**lustrous:** glowing

²**corrosion:** chemical damage

³**untarnished:** unchanged in color



An essay **introduction** consists of two parts: a few general statements to attract your reader's attention and a **thesis statement** to state the main idea of the essay. A thesis statement for an essay is like a topic sentence for a paragraph: It names the specific topic and gives the reader a general idea of the contents of the essay. The **body** consists of one or more paragraphs. Each paragraph develops a subdivision of the topic, so the number of paragraphs in the body will vary with the number of subdivisions or subtopics. The **conclusion**, like the concluding sentence in a paragraph, is a summary or review of the main points discussed in the body.

An essay has **unity** and **coherence**, just as a paragraph does. **Transition signals** and the **repetition of key nouns** link the paragraphs into a cohesive whole.

¹Concluding sentences for body paragraphs in an essay are not always necessary, especially when the ideas in consecutive paragraphs are closely related.

Paragraph A: Paragraph without Support**Red-Light Running**

Although some people think that red-light running is a minor traffic violation that is no worse than jaywalking,¹ it can, in fact, become a deadly crime. Red-light runners cause accidents all the time. Sometimes people are seriously injured and even killed. It is especially a problem in rush hour traffic. Everyone is in a hurry to get home, so drivers run red lights everywhere. The police do not do much about it because they are too busy. The only time they pay attention is when there is an accident, and then it is too late. In conclusion, running a red light is a serious offense.

Paragraph B: Paragraph with Support**Red-Light Running**

¹Although some people think red-light running is a minor traffic violation that is no worse than jaywalking, it can, in fact, become a deadly crime. ²Red-light runners cause hundreds of accidents, including deaths and injuries as well as millions of dollars in damages. ³Each year more than 900 people die, and nearly 200,000 are injured in crashes that involve red-light running. ⁴Motorists run red lights all the time. ⁵For example, in Fairfax, Virginia, a five-month-long survey at five busy intersections revealed that a motorist ran a red light every 20 minutes. ⁶Red-light runners are seldom caught. ⁷According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, “Communities don’t have the resources to allow police to patrol intersections as often as would be needed to ticket all motorists who run red lights” (“Q&A”).²

The next section shows you how to use examples as support. Other types of support—facts, statistics, and quotations—are explained in Chapter 3.

Examples

Examples are perhaps the easiest kind of supporting detail to use because you can often take examples from your own knowledge and experience. You don’t have to search the library or the Internet for supporting material. Furthermore, examples make your writing lively and interesting, and your reader is more likely to remember your point if you support it with a memorable example.

Words and phrases that introduce examples include *for example*, *for instance*, and *such as*. See Transition Signals on pages 25–29 in Chapter 2 for more information.

¹**jaywalking:** crossing a street where there is no marked area for it

²“Q&A: Red Light Running.” Insurance Institute for Highway Safety June 2003. 26 Feb. 2004 <http://www.hwysafety.org/safety_facts/qanda/rlc.htm>.

Study the model essay about the influence of Native Americans¹ on modern U.S. culture and notice its structure.

MODEL*Essay Structure*

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

THESIS STATEMENT

BODY PARAGRAPH 1

BODY PARAGRAPH 2

BODY PARAGRAPH 3

BODY PARAGRAPH 4

Native American Influences on Modern U.S. Culture

When the first Europeans came to the North American continent, they encountered the completely new cultures of the Native American peoples of North America. Native Americans, who had highly developed cultures in many respects, must have been as curious about the strange European manners and customs as the Europeans were curious about them. As always happens when two or more cultures come into contact, there was a cultural exchange. Native Americans adopted some of the Europeans' ways, and the Europeans adopted some of their ways. As a result, Native Americans have made many valuable contributions to modern U.S. culture, particularly in the areas of language, art, food, and government.

First of all, Native Americans left a permanent mark on the English language. The early English-speaking settlers borrowed from several different Native American languages words for places in this new land. All across the country are cities, towns, rivers, and states with Native American names. For example, the states of Delaware, Iowa, Illinois, and Alabama are named after Native American tribes,² as are the cities of Chicago, Miami, and Spokane. In addition to place names, English adopted from various Native American languages the words for animals and plants found in the Americas. *Chipmunk*, *moose*, *raccoon*, *skunk*, *tobacco*, and *squash* are just a few examples.

Although the vocabulary of English is the area that shows the most Native American influence, it is not the only area of U.S. culture that has been shaped by contact with Native Americans. Art is another area of important Native American contributions. Wool rugs woven by women of the Navajo tribe in Arizona and New Mexico are highly valued works of art in the United States. Native American jewelry made from silver and turquoise is also very popular and very expensive. Especially in the western and southwestern regions of the United States, native crafts such as pottery, leather products, and beadwork can be found in many homes. Indeed, native art and handicrafts are a treasured part of U.S. culture.

In addition to language and art, agriculture is another area in which Native Americans had a great and lasting influence on the peoples who arrived here from Europe, Africa, and Asia. Being skilled farmers, the Native Americans of North America taught the newcomers many things about farming techniques and crops. Every U.S. schoolchild has heard the story of how Native Americans taught the first settlers to place a dead fish in a planting hole to provide fertilizer for the growing plant. Furthermore, they taught the settlers irrigation methods and crop rotation. Many of the foods people in the United States eat today were introduced to the Europeans by Native Americans. For example, corn and chocolate were unknown in Europe. Now they are staples in the U.S. diet.

Finally, it may surprise some people to learn that citizens of the United States are also indebted³ to the native people for our form of government. The Iroquois, who were an extremely large tribe with many branches called "nations," had

¹Native Americans: American Indians

²tribes: groups of native people

³indebted: owing gratitude

developed a highly sophisticated system of government to settle disputes that arose between the various branches. Five of the nations had joined together in a confederation called “The League of the Iroquois.” Under the league, each nation was autonomous⁴ in running its own internal affairs, but the nations acted as a unit when dealing with outsiders. The league kept the Iroquois from fighting among themselves and was also valuable in diplomatic relations with other tribes. When the 13 colonies were considering what kind of government to establish after they had won their independence from Britain, someone suggested that they use a system similar to that of the League of the Iroquois. Under this system, each colony or future state would be autonomous in managing its own affairs but would join forces with the other states to deal with matters that concerned them all. This is exactly what happened. As a result, the present form of government of the United States can be traced directly back to a Native American model.

CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH

In conclusion, we can easily see from these few examples the extent of Native American influence on our language, our art forms, our eating habits, and our government. The people of the United States are deeply indebted to Native Americans for their contributions to U.S. culture.

Writing Technique Questions

1. How many paragraphs does this essay contain? How many paragraphs are in the body?
2. Underline the topic sentence of each body paragraph, and double underline the topic. (*Note:* The topic sentence is not necessarily the first sentence in every paragraph.)
3. Notice which noun phrase appears four times in the introduction. Circle each repetition of this key noun in the other paragraphs of the essay.

Now let’s examine the parts of an essay in more detail.

The Introductory Paragraph

An introductory paragraph has two parts, general statements and the thesis statement. **General statements**

- introduce the general topic of the essay.
- capture the reader’s interest.

The **thesis statement**

- states the specific topic.
- may list subtopics or subdivisions of the main topic or subtopics.
- may indicate the pattern of organization of the essay.
- is normally the last sentence in the introductory paragraph.

⁴**autonomous:** independent, self-governing