Student Name   _____

Student ID   _____

EWRT Instructor   _____
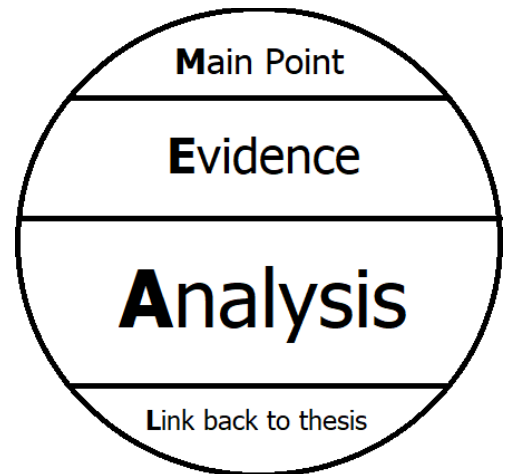
Date Completed   _____

Writing Effective Body Paragraphs

Many student writers often find that creating solid, effective body paragraphs is a difficult process. Many wonder what should be in a body paragraph and where this information should go. To simplify, a paragraph should contain four major parts (**MEAL**)*:
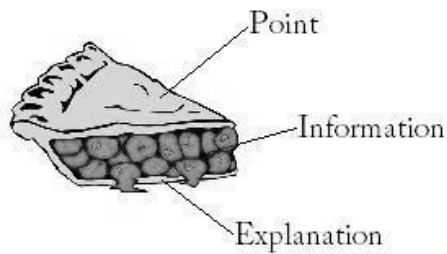- The topic sentence (**M**ain point)
- The supporting sentences (**E**vidence and **A**nalysis)
- The concluding/transitional sentence (**L**ink back to thesis)

In this activity, you will learn and practice a process you can use to create effective paragraphs.

*Note: You may have heard of PIE before. PIE is the same as MEAL.

P (**P**oint)	=	M (**M**ain point)
I (**I**nformation)	=	E (**E**vidence)
E (**E**xplanation)	=	A (**A**nalysis) &
		L (**L**ink back to thesis)

Main Point

Evidence

Analysis

Link back to thesis

Step 1: The Main Idea

The *main idea* of a body paragraph is its central topic. Often, the main idea is found in the "topic sentence," which is usually the first sentence of the paragraph. However, the main idea can sometimes be the second or third sentence. Sometimes, a paragraph will have multiple topics related to each other. No matter how many ideas you have, the reader should have a clear idea of the main point(s) of the paragraph, right at the beginning.

Example of a thesis (main ideas of the whole essay):

Through **hard work**, organization, and dedication, I was able to get into a good university.

Example of the first body paragraph's topic sentence:

One way I was able to get into a good university was through my **hard work**, by studying everyday right after school.

Here, the topic sentence connects back to the thesis by repeating its first main point, then gives the main idea of the paragraph, which is how this person studied everyday after school. Also, notice how the first point of the thesis is repeated in the topic sentence. This helps make it clear to the reader that you are connecting your information back to the thesis.

Step 2: Evidence and Analysis

The *evidence and analysis* of a paragraph is the main information the reader wants to know. This will take up nearly the whole paragraph, and will be much longer than your main idea and concluding sentence.

Your evidence proves the topic sentence and/or thesis, which is the claim you are making. Evidence can come from anywhere, such as a book, article, study, personal

experience (sometimes), and much more. It is up to the writer to decide the best source to use.

Analysis is what supports your evidence. You should never leave evidence without analysis, as the reader might understand it differently than you. Your analysis is the explanation of your source, and how it connects back to your main idea. This is usually the biggest chunk of the body paragraph. Imagine the reader doesn't understand anything about the topic of your essay, so you have to make sure that you explain everything very clearly.

Example of evidence:

A study done by the California government on traffic showed that when drivers do not use their phones while driving, the chance of an accident goes down by almost half.

Example of analysis:

When drivers use their phones, they are not paying attention to traffic or the road. Without this focus, the driver has a much higher chance of hitting another car or ignoring a light. However, when drivers put away their phones and pay attention to the road, they are much more alert and are less likely to get into an accident, due to them not being distracted.

Notice how in the evidence, the writer said, "A study done…" When citing evidence, being specific and using reputable sources helps the reader trust the information being given to them. Do check with your professor if you are required to follow a particular citation system, such as MLA or APA.

Step 3: Link Back to the Larger Claim

When a writer *links back to the larger claim*, they show the reader that they proved their overall claim. The reader should never look at the evidence and analysis and ask "Why does this matter?" or, "How does this relate to the main idea?" Another name for linking back to the larger claim is a concluding or transitional sentence, which is found as the last sentence of the paragraph. A transition sentence does the above, while also connecting it to the next paragraph. A concluding sentence is usually found in the last paragraph before the conclusion, and just does the above, since there is no body paragraph after it to connect to.

Example of transition sentence:

When drivers do not use their phones, they greatly lower their chances of getting into accidents, but they also need to actively be paying attention to the road.

Here, the first part of the sentence connects back to the main idea/claim, while the second part of the sentence leads into the next body paragraph, about needing to focus on the road.

Activities:
<u>After</u> you go through the following activities, meet with a WRC tutor to identify the main point (**M**), evidence (**E**), analysis (**A**), and the link back to thesis (**L**) in both activities, using the annotation tool on Zoom.

#1. Read the following body paragraph. This is a good example of a paragraph constructed using the MEAL concept.

> Students who learn how to write well will earn better grades in most classes. This is true because most instructors assign a variety of written assignments, and depending on the class, these written assignments often encompass a large percentage of a student's final grade. According to John Doe, a professor of English at Aims Community College, the average undergraduate student will write twenty-five different essays while seeking a bachelor's degree. This number increases dramatically for students who go on to seek a graduate degree. For instance, all college students seeking a degree will be required to take a composition class. In this class alone, students will write five different essays. Furthermore, other classes, such as history, psychology, nursing, also require students to write multiple essays. Since all students, regardless of major, will be required to compose a large number of essays, it is important that they learn how to write well.

#2. Choose **ONE** of the four topics below and write a paragraph. While writing, make sure to include the MEAL—the main point (**M**), evidence (**E**), analysis (**A**), and a link back to the thesis (**L**).

1. Discuss how rigorous academic work can result in higher grades.
2. Analyze why colleges and universities try to keep faculty and staff happy.
3. Explain why using AI (Chat GPT) can lead to negative results.
4. Discuss your favorite class, and why it is better than the other ones you have taken.

Topic #_____

You can write your paragraph here:

Note to tutors: Remind your tutees to save their screens after annotating!