



UNIVERSITY OF
**DETROIT
MERCY**

Body Paragraphs

<https://writingcenter.udmercy.edu/> (for resources)

<http://udm.mywconline.com/> (for appointments)



The Writing Center
DETROIT MERCY

What Are Body Paragraphs?

- ⇒ Body paragraphs provide information in a structure that support your thesis statement.
- ⇒ Each paragraph should always have the following:
 - A topic sentence.
 - A transitional phrase that creates a smooth connection between paragraphs.
 - Evidence and supporting information that reinforce the thesis statement *and* the paragraph's topic sentence.
 - A conclusive statement that wraps up the paragraph's main idea and reminds the reader how the paragraph supports the thesis.

How Many Body Paragraphs Should Be in An Essay?

- ⇒ In college writing assignments, we typically move beyond the five-paragraph essay model.
- ⇒ We aim for 2 to 3 body paragraphs per page. We should never have more than three per page or less than two per page.
- ⇒ Depending on your assignment parameters, essay topic and rubric, the number of body paragraphs will vary considerably.

Sample Body Paragraph with Key Components Labeled

[1] In recent times, hand-writing class notes has been in competition with electronic notetaking; however, hand-written notes are a more effective way of recording information because it calls upon the student to pay the utmost attention. **[2]** Retaining an entire class session's worth of information is nearly impossible, so hand-written notes serve to encourage the student to attentively listen to the lecture to process, categorize and prioritize information (Smith & Jones 12). This is not the case with electronic notes as one can normally type more quickly than one writes, which may cause attentiveness to diminish to attempt to type nearly 100% of the lecture. There is less retained, though more is documented, because the student isn't having to make as many critical thinking decisions about what to document or not. According to Smith & Jones, the cognitive processes that are required for handwriting notes leads to a 35% increase in retention of information if utilized regularly over note taking on keyboard-centered electronic devices (55-57). **[3]** With this research, it is reasonable to conclude that more cognitive engagement means more retention after-the-fact; thus, hand-written notes are the more effective way of notetaking if the goal of recording is retention.

This Body Paragraph Includes:

- [1]** Topic sentence & transitional statement.
- [2]** Evidence and supporting information for claim(s).
- [3]** Conclusive statement that wraps up the paragraph's main idea and reiterates thesis.

Sources: Harvard College Writing Center <https://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/what-do-introductions-across-disciplines-have-common>

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Resources for Writers: Introduction Strategies
<https://cmsw.mit.edu/writing-and-communication-center/resources/writers/introduction-strategies/>

Utah Valley University Writing Center: www.uvu.edu/writingcenter/