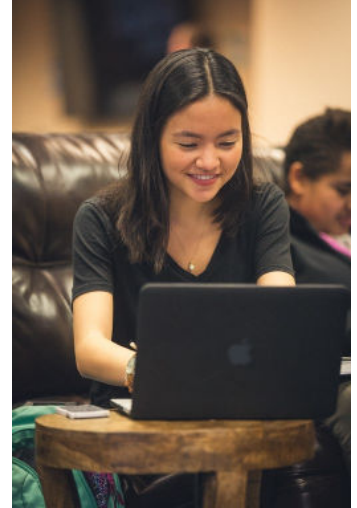


Writing Well

Academic writing differs from any other. Professors expect your writing assignments and discussion board posts to be 1) **thesis-driven** (a clear purpose and point), 2) **informed** (researched based on experts' published opinions), 3) **conscientious** (diligence, integrity, and completeness), and 4) **formal** (third-person, active voice, and correct formatting). Moreover, being able to communicate your ideas clearly and concisely is a critical skill in the workforce. Now, here is the most important thing to know about writing well: by acquiring guidance, practice, and confidence, writing well is a skill that you can learn, improve upon, and master.

In academic writing, authors often use well-organized paragraphs, unlike the style in popular press books. Each paragraph is often just an essay about a particular portion of the topic that supports the overall goal(s) of the chapter. This three-part pattern forms the framework for individual academic paragraphs and research papers in general.



Academic Paragraphs

Simply put, writers organize academic paragraphs in a strategic manner. They start with a **topic sentence** (the point of the paragraph). Next, there are **2-3 main points** that support the topic, with each point having some sort of **scholarly support** (e.g., a reference or a quote). Finally, the paragraph ends with a **conclusion** (a summary of the points above).

Five-Paragraph Model

Simply put, the [five-paragraph model](#) has only five paragraphs. Interestingly, the structure both mimics and uses the model of an academic paragraph. The first paragraph introduces the main point of the essay. Each of the next three paragraphs explains one point of the thesis. Finally, the concluding paragraph is a concise summary of what the previous four contained.

Grammar and Punctuation

The boy yelled, "Let's eat grandma!" Punctuation saves lives! Without the comma after the word *eat*, the boy is suggesting that the diners should eat grandma! It should read as follows, "Let's eat, grandma!" This quip illustrates a critical point—punctuation matters in writing. With all of the rules that surround commas, colons, semi-colons, dashes, apostrophes, and other punctuation marks, it is no wonder that so many people have trouble using them correctly. The following resources will be quite helpful as you continue: [Punctuation Guide](#) | [Which vs. That](#) | [So vs. So That](#) | [Active Voice](#) | [Active Verbs](#) | [Sentence Variety](#) | [Scholarly Tone](#)

Resources

The **Writing Lab** (www.regent.edu/writing) offers free, 40-minute [scheduled appointments](#) (online, by phone, or face-to-face) during which certified coaches can assist you to:

- Become a stronger self-editor
- Understand how to write for an academic audience
- Identify and avoid plagiarism
- Help with your thesis, organization, grammar, punctuation, and more.

Contact the [Writing Lab](#) at (757) 352-4925 or writing@regent.edu

You can find other great writing resources here: <https://www.regent.edu/writing>