

The MEAL Paragraph

What is it?

It's a paragraph writing structure.

Why should you use the MEAL structure?

You should use it because it gives sustenance to your writing. Why do you eat a meal? Well, you eat because your body needs nourishment. That nourishment from a well balanced meal gives you strong bones and muscles. In the same way, a well written MEAL paragraph is organized like a well balanced meal and also gives your writing strength. Basically, better ingredients make a better MEAL, whether you are eating a good meal or you are writing a good paragraph.

So what are the ingredients of a MEAL paragraph and how do you write one?

The basic elements include:	When writing each section, ask yourself questions:	Each section should accomplish the following functions:
M = <u>M</u> ain Idea	Whenever you begin writing you must ask yourself: <i>"What will I be proving in this paragraph?"</i> The main idea, the first sentence of your paragraph should answer this question.	The main idea is the topic sentence. It is like a mini-thesis. It states what the paragraph is attempting to <i>prove</i> .
E = <u>E</u> vidence	Once you have written your main idea, the next question you have to ask yourself is: <i>"How will I show that my main idea is correct?"</i>	The evidence is made up of examples, quotes (with page #), details and facts that support and demonstrate the main idea.
A = <u>A</u> nalysis	Once, you have provided evidence, you next have to ask yourself: <i>"How is the evidence proof of the topic sentence?"</i>	The analysis explains how the evidence proves the main idea, and it shows you understand how it proves the main idea. In other words, it interprets. It makes connections. It makes inferences. It provides insight.
L = <u>L</u> ink	At this point, you need to ask yourself: <i>"How do I bring the paragraph to a close? Where do I go from here? What will I be saying next? or What could I say next?"</i>	The link should bring the ideas in this paragraph to a close and connect the ideas in this paragraph to the ideas in the next one. This can be done by drawing conclusions and offering comments.