

*Building a digestible paragraph is easy. You need a **top**, some **meat** (or **turkey** or **soybean**), some **support**, and a **wrapper** to go.*

#1: The TOP a) At the very **top** is the **topic** sentence; or, the **top** bun, however you want to refer to it. It should generally be one sentence long—nothing too breadly. But it should be sturdy. After all, it presents the main idea of the paragraph. This sentence should generally relate back to the essay's thesis, and it should always be a *claim*, never a fact or a quotation. It has to keep this thing together.



It is true that some paragraphs offer their main idea in the second, third, or last sentence. That said, the most important thing is that the reader shouldn't have to stop and reread the paragraph, trying to figure out what it's saying. The first sentence is a good place to keep the reader on track. The way a paragraph conveys its claim dictates whether your reader will see

it as a coherent idea or as a hodge-podge of different points. Remember: we're eating a burger here, not plowing through a motel buffet free-for-all.

b) Also on the **top** are the optional **toppings**. These are one or two sentences that should provide any explanation of or elaboration on the main idea. This is where you might define key terms or provide any context that is needed before moving on to your evidence. The thing about toppings is—they should only be there if they add to the experience. Your entire paragraph should not just be made up of these sentences; otherwise you would just be eating a salad.



2. **The MEAT** – This is the juicy part. The **meat** of the paragraph (or turkey or soybean!) sets up and presents a relevant/representative example from the text (a quotation or summary of event) that supports the claim from the topic sentence. This might come to one to three sentences. Your evidence should always consist of specific details, never generalizations. Your evidence could be information from journal articles you have found in the library; it could be data from research or interviews you’ve conducted yourself; it could be a quotation or paraphrase from a work of literature; it could be an image; it could be a chain of logical reasoning you have developed. In some types of papers, it might be an anecdote or personal experience! Roast chuck, ground beef, turkey, or soy - this is what the rest of the sandwich depends upon.



3. **The SUPPORT** – The bottom bun is always underrated. It is crucial. The **support** section might be two to three sentences long, and should be devoted to *analyzing* the evidence it provides. In other words, it should explain exactly how the evidence you’ve cited proves what you think it proves - how specific details of the quotation/evidence relate to and **support** your claim. The meaty evidence shouldn’t be plopped down on a plate itself.” A burger patty well, a total mess. You to wash their hands after and left to “speak for without a bottom bun is, can’t expect your readers reading.



4. **WRAP IT TO GO** – This last part relates the main point of your paragraph back to the thesis and provides, if possible, a transition that connects this point with the new but related topic you will take up in your next paragraph. Usually only one sentence long, this is designed to **wrap up** all the things you just acquired, and take them with you when you go on your way.

