



WC | TS's Support for Perfect Paragraphs

“Perfect paragraphs” can be broken down into **four steps**.

- (1) Craft key topic sentences
- (2) Create supportive sentences
- (3) Incorporate clear information
- (4) Check for cohesion

Key Topic Sentences: Key topic sentences open and offer the main idea of the paragraph.

- **Example:** **The Illinois Wesleyan Writing Center provides many ways for students to improve upon their writing skills.** Students can work with their peers and Writing Center staff by registering for writing workshops. Students may instead want to work with a Writing Center tutor one on one by signing up for an appointment.

Supportive Sentences: Supportive sentences succeeding the topic sentence should elaborate upon the main idea of the paragraph.

- **Example:** The Illinois Wesleyan Writing Center provides many ways for students to improve upon their writing skills. **Students can work with their peers and Writing Center staff by registering for writing workshops.** First, students should check the Illinois Wesleyan University website and visit the Writing Center schedule. Once they have found a workshop that interests them, they should click on the link embedded in the title to learn more about the event. To sign up for that workshop, students should email the Writing Center Director with their student email address and any questions they have. **Students may instead want to work with a Writing Center tutor one-on-one by signing up for an appointment...**

Clear Information: Clear information serves as the evidence of the paragraph. Evidence is used to support the stance taken in the topic sentence through the use of outside sources.¹

Evidence can take the following forms:

- (1) **Quotations:** Excerpts of an author’s work that appear within quotation marks and precede an in-text citation.
- (2) **Paraphrasing:** Excerpts of an author’s work rewritten using your own voice. Though paraphrasing does not involve reciting an author word for word, an in-text citation is still required.

Cohesion: To check for cohesion is to make sure that the contents of the paragraph work together with the topic sentence. When you check for cohesion, ask yourself the following:

- Can I identify the topic of my paragraph?
- Are there any sentences that my paragraph can stand without?
- Do my sentences logically flow into one another?
- Do the supporting details in my paragraph explain the topic sentence?

¹ A more comprehensive overview of sources can be found under the “resources” section of our website if you click on “Types of Sources and How to Use Them.”