

Organizing a Paragraph – Buying (into) the M.E.A.L. Plan

Here is a way to organize your paragraphs when you're in a pinch. It's particularly useful for connecting ideas together and relating them back to your thesis and the overall structure of your paper. It will improve flow, strengthen your essay, and make you hungry, all at once!

M.E.A.L. plan

M: Main Idea – topic sentence that relates back to the THESIS (not an evaluative claim, but one which focuses on the effect the text/audio/visual has on you)

E: Evidence – details from the text: paraphrasing, summary, quotes, theory...

A: Analysis – So what? Why is the evidence important?: can include structural analysis, comparing and contrasting, focusing on what has come before, looking at criticism, drawing connections between the **main idea** and **evidence**, explanations that show comprehension, and a focus on the GAP

L: Link back to the main idea/ or link to the next idea (transition) – drawing back to the important, over-arching theme of paragraphs, or the **main idea**.

Example of a basic M.E.A.L. Plan Structure:

As pointed out in my thesis, _____ . We need look no further than _____ to see evidence of this fact. By examining the above claim, we can realize that what I argue in my thesis is true.

Sample Using the Above Structure:*

As I explained in my thesis, biological units in hospitals are important for a variety of factors. We need look no further than maggots for an example of their usefulness. In their article, “Maggot debridement therapy,” Ali Korhan Sig, Ozgur Koru, and Engin Araz articulate the importance of maggots in the hospital, noting that it “is a very effective treatment technique for chronic wounds, and, in addition, is a cheap and easy-to-use method” (146). The added bonus of the cheap cost and relative availability of maggots means hospitals should consider them as an alternative to more expensive care. Ultimately, as Korhan et al. prove, the biological unit of maggots is important in the hospital setting for providing affordable, successful patient care.

Citation for further reading about maggots:

Sig, A. K., Ozgur Koru, & Engin Araz. “Maggot Debridement Therapy: Utility in Chronic Wounds and a Perspective Beyond.” *Wound Practice & Research*, vol. 26, no. 3, Sept. 2018, pp. 146–153. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rzh& AN=132213353&site=eds-live&scope=site. Accessed 14 August 2018.

*Note this sample uses standard rhetoric and composition strategies including directly citing the source in MLA style. Other genres (such as STEM fields) would prefer you paraphrase instead of directly citing and that you use APA, ASA, or another citation style as specified by your instructor.