

# MEAL Plan



The MEAL plan can be used as a guide for writing body paragraphs. The MEAL Plan is an acronym—which was coined by Duke University—that stands for Main idea, Evidence, Analysis, and Link. This strategy is used to construct an effective paragraph.

## Parts of the MEAL Plan

This is the paragraph's central focus. The main idea is usually located in the beginning of the paragraph as the topic sentence, which establishes what the paragraph will entail. However, there are some exceptions to where the main idea is placed within a paragraph. Regardless of its placement, the reader should be able to understand the main idea after reading the paragraph.

This generally consists of textual evidence (such as quotations, paraphrases, or



Does the main idea correlate to the thesis of the paper?

The main idea should always connect to your thesis so your paragraphs are in conversation



Does the paragraph smoothly transition into the next?

Your analysis should answer at least one of the following questions: Why is the evidence important? How do you interpret the evidence? How does the evidence support your main idea? What purpose does the evidence have in the paragraph?

## MEAL Plan Outline

The main idea is usually located in the first sentence and it should state the purpose of your paragraph. The evidence can either be a paraphrase or a direct quote from any primary or secondary sources. Primary sources consist of materials such as statistics, creative literature, interviews, memoirs, autobiographies, or government documents. Secondary sources are interpretations based on primary sources. They are composed of scholarly and/or peer-reviewed articles, magazines, dictionaries, documentaries, and newspapers. Make sure you provide a proper in-text citation at the end of this section. After you have presented the evidence, you should input your own analysis. In this section, you

