

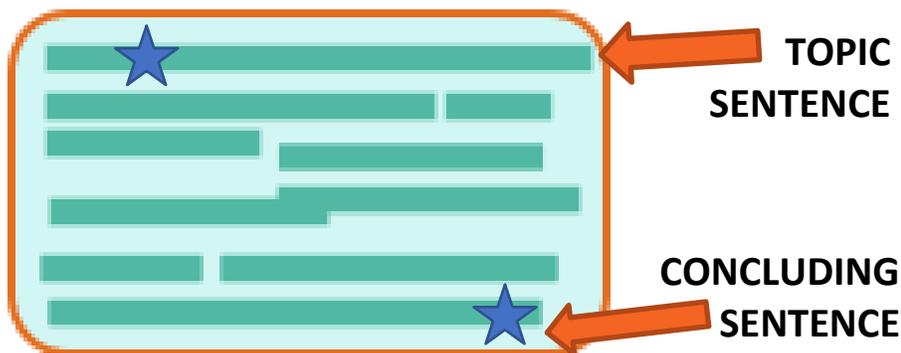
Structuring Paragraphs

Cheat Sheet

Graduate Writing Lab
School of Engineering & Applied Science, University of Virginia

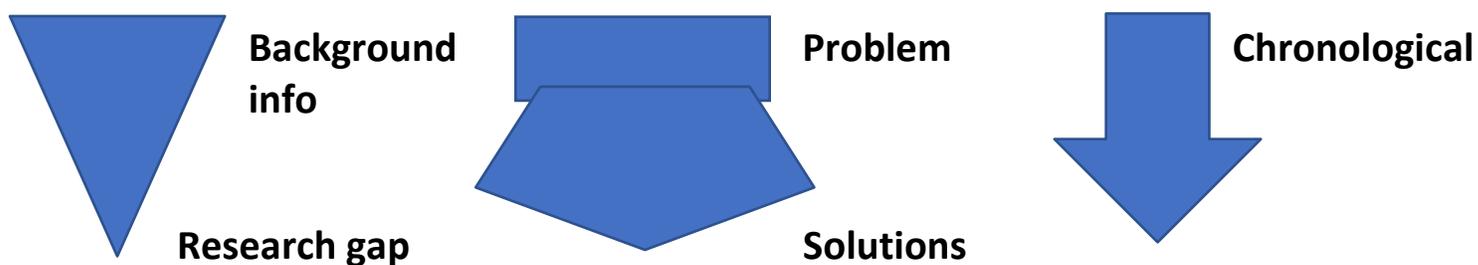
one paragraph = one main idea

Use “power positions” in each paragraph to clarify the main idea or key takeaway.



Choose A Pattern of Organization

Impose a **fitting and logical pattern of organization** on the details you include.



Add **signposting** and **connectors** to show your reader how these details relate to each other and to the main point.



BECAUSE



How to be Cohesive

Within and between sentences, put **familiar** information first, then **new** information.

Familiar X.....new XY.

XY.....new Z. Takeaway about Z.

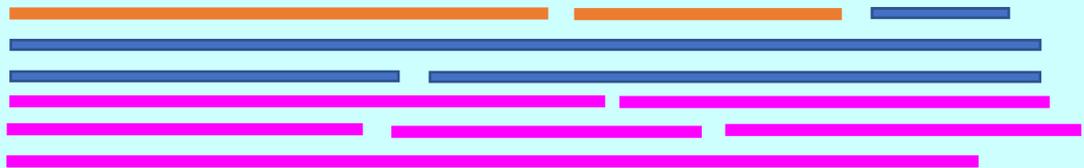
Use **parallel structure** to let the reader know what to expect.

- If you're focusing on a topic, **consistently make it the subject of your sentences**, not the object.
- If you list things in your topic sentence, **keep the same order** when you discuss them in the middle of the paragraph:

Order the first time mentioned: ■, ■, ■.

Order in paragraph:

Concepts ■, ■, and ■ are essential to our project.



For our purposes, ■ is the most promising approach.

Be Concise

When in doubt, be direct and simple. Cut out wordiness, redundancies, jargon, and empty phrases.

