



Paragraphs

Each paragraph in an assignment should contain one idea or cover one aspect relevant to the topic. Follow these steps to build a paragraph of your own. Then look at the example following. It has been adapted from a journal article.

Step 1 – Outline

When writing a paragraph, first write an outline of the paragraph and include:

- the topic
- supporting information (with in-text references)

Example

Topic: Effects of coercive leadership style

Supporting information:

- effect on work climate – flexibility lessened (Kooyman 2012, p. 14)
- inhibition of new ideas – feelings of disrespect (Smith 2015, p. 7)
- no initiative, little responsibility (Kooyman 2012, p. 11)
- erodes pride, self-worth (Head 2017, p. 23)

Step 2 – Topic sentence

Write a topic sentence.

Example

Of all the leadership styles, the coercive type is the least effective in most situations.

Step 3 – Supporting sentences

Next write a supporting sentence for each point. Use facts or examples to support your points.

Example

One effect it has on an organisation is that it reduces flexibility (Kooyman 2012, p. 14). Top-down decision-making inhibits the generation of new ideas and may lead to employees feeling disrespected by management (Smith 2015, p. 7). This approach may lead to a lack of initiative and reduced sense of responsibility. As a result performance levels may drop (Kooyman 2012, p. 11). Furthermore, as Head (2017, p. 23) suggests, the coercive style erodes pride in work well done and diminishes staff clarity, commitment, and self-worth as an employee.



Step 4 — Concluding sentence

Then write a concluding sentence to sum up.

Example

Therefore, if the coercive style is relied on in a workplace to the exclusion of the other styles, the long-term impact on morale and feelings will be detrimental to the organisation.

Step 5 — Final version of the paragraph

Write the final version of the paragraph. Notice how the example paragraph below has a topic sentence, supporting sentences and concluding sentence.

Example

Of all the leadership styles, the coercive type is the least effective in most situations. One effect it has on an organisation is that it reduces flexibility (Kooyman 2012, p. 14). Top-down decision-making inhibits the generation of new ideas and may lead to employees feeling disrespected by management (Smith 2015, p. 7). This approach may lead to a lack of initiative and reduced sense of responsibility. As a result performance levels may drop (Kooyman 2012, p. 11). Furthermore, as Head (2017, p. 23) suggests, the coercive style erodes pride in work well done and diminishes staff clarity, commitment, and self-worth as an employee. Therefore, if the coercive style is relied on in a workplace to the exclusion of the other styles, the long-term impact on morale and feelings will be detrimental to the organisation.

References

Adapted from Goleman, D 2000, 'Leadership that gets results', *Harvard Business Review*, March-April, pp. 78–90.