

Deadline Ready: Does my structure make sense?

A well-structured text makes your writing more coherent and understandable. Structure can refer to:

- the organisation of your entire text and
- the ways that you put your paragraphs together.

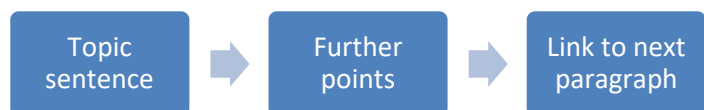
Text structure

1. First, what are you being asked to write? Does your module handbook have any structure requirements that you need to follow? What is your assignment brief? What is the marking criteria? You can also review the intended “outcomes” of the assignment for hints about what your reader is expecting.
2. Now consider what you are writing. Write the main aim of your text in the box below. Is the main aim clear and organised? Is the language easy to understand and not just repeating the same words in the assignment brief?

3. Write your structure/ intended structure in the space below. What do you plan on doing in each section of your text?

Paragraph structure

Generally, paragraphs have their own structure:



Try to restrict yourself to one idea per paragraph and make sure that your paragraphs are of a similar length.

Choose one of the following texts or one that you have brought with you. Do they have clear topic sentences? What else do the authors do to lead the reader through the text?

Text 1: Nursing

Simulation is the reproduction of the essential features of a real-life situation. Although nurse educators strive to mimic reality in their practice laboratories, they find that nursing students often do not make the imaginative leap required to visualize a dummy model as a real patient. Consequently, students frequently experience difficulties making the transition from the learning laboratory to the real patient setting. To better facilitate this transition, nursing learning centers have recently begun moving from static, plastic models to costly, interactive, computerized models. However, it is not uncommon that, following the purchase of this equipment, the teaching style goes unchanged the equipment is underused, and its potential remains unrealized. Several aspects of simulation technology suggest it is ideal for nursing education, especially for undergraduates. (Medley and Horne, 2005, p. 31)

Text 2: Education

Distance education holds greater promise and is subject to more suspicion than any other instructional mode in the 21st century. Many traditional educators view distance education with scepticism and express concerns about quality control. Some of this scepticism is justified, in part by the historical roots and nature of distance education. The history of distance education spans three centuries and reflects an egalitarian approach to education. Distance education began with rudimentary vocational courses delivered by postal delivery service. Now, distance learning programs have snowballed into online instructional delivery systems capable of granting doctoral degrees. By its' nature, the common thread linking the two extremes is an instructional mode in which the teacher is not in the same place at the same time as the student. (Casey, 2008, p. 45)

Text 3: Human Resource Management

There are now a growing number of studies which make a serious attempt to link HRM and performance. (...) They are not all looking at quite the same thing so they are cumulative in only a very general sense. One interesting attempt to identify the various possible approaches has been derived from the work by Venkatraman (1989) whose aim was to classify the various types of 'fit' in research on strategy. More recently, his approach has been adapted slightly by Sivasubramaniam and Kroeck (1995) to classify the various perspectives on HRM. The concept of 'fit' or 'integration' is central to many attempts to theorize about HRM so this seems an interesting way of trying to proceed. Essentially, they suggest that the various types of HRM fit can be ordered along to dimensions of Internal-External fit and Criterion specific or Criterion free. This provides four main possibilities, although one is further sub-divided. (Guest, 1997)

Text 4: Fashion

The pandemic remains the focus of many brands, as they help to “Fund the fight against the virus” (Maoui, 2020). One way that fashion houses have provided support is by “Pivoting their production lines” (Webb, 2020) to produce personal protective equipment. This equipment is created using technology in factories of fashion brands and includes protective gear for workers in the medical field. Ralph Lauren is a leading brand in the efforts of providing COVID-19 relief support (see Fig. 5). As well as producing 250,000 masks and 25,000 isolation gowns (Maoui, 2020) — with the support of their network of suppliers — Ralph Lauren launched their ‘Polo Cloth Mask Collection’ (see Figs. 6 and 7) which are face coverings produced for the public; 40 percent of the retail price is donated to the ‘COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund’ for the World Health Organisation. These reusable face coverings are made from their “Signature shirting” (Ralph Lauren, 2020) and provide 80 percent particle filtration. With efforts like these, it might appear that the fashion industry has made significant contributions throughout the pandemic.

Check whether the following approaches to structuring the paragraph were used in the previous examples.

Does the paragraph:

- ☐ Use a topic sentence
- ☐ Start by telling the reader why this paragraph is relevant and useful in the paper.
- ☐ Refer to information in the previous sentence using **this + subject word**. For example:

Sentence 1: Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) were banned worldwide in the 1987 Montreal Protocol.
Sentence 2: This development, despite suffering some setbacks, has led to the ever decreasing hole in the ozone layer and shows a positive example of what can happen when there is a worldwide commitment to fighting manmade environmental catastrophe.

- ☐ Repeat key words
- ☐ Use synonyms of words
- ☐ Use transitional words or phrases (It follows that; Consequently; Essentially; Accordingly; For Example, etc)
- ☐ Indicates that there is a greater order (First; To begin with; Following; Then; Finally, etc)
- ☐ Have a conclusion sentence which could link to the topic of the next paragraph

Additional resources:

- Look at the Manchester Academic Phrasebank for more examples of transitional phrases and words.

Works referenced:

Casey, D. M. (2008) ‘The historical development of distance education through technology’, *TechTrends*, 52(2), p. 45.
Guest, D. E. (1997) ‘Human resource management and performance: a review and research agenda’, *International journal of human resource management*, 8(3), pp. 263-276.
Medley, C. F. and Home C. (2005) ‘Using simulation technology for undergraduate nursing education’ *Journal of Nursing Education*, 44(1), pp. 31-34.