

One of the most important goals in scientific writing is communicating complex ideas clearly. To do so, you need to be able to write good paragraphs. The ability to write concise, well-organized paragraphs is hard to acquire, but just as important as writing clearly at the sentence level.

Tips:

1. Construct a strong, clear topic sentence.
 - The topic sentence should identify the main point of your paragraph.
 - As a general rule, topic sentences should be clear enough that a reader can get the gist of your paper just by reading the topic sentences of each paragraph.
 - Try to keep topic sentences simple (e.g., avoid breaking them up with commas).
 - Once you've written your paragraph, it's helpful to go back and check that a) you have a topic sentence, and b) it clearly captures the focal point of the paragraph.
2. Each paragraph should make one main point.
 - In general, try to keep paragraphs between 3-5 sentences.
 - If your paragraph is getting too long, it is probably making more than one main point, and it may be time to break it into two (and make a new topic sentence).
3. Establish internal flow by placing old information first and new information last.*
 - For example, compare these two passages. **Bold** = old information; *Italics* = new information:

Farmers try to provide optimal growing conditions for crops by using *soil additives to adjust soil pH*. | *Garden lime, or agricultural limestone*, is made from pulverized chalk, and **can be used to raise the pH of the soil**.

Farmers try to provide optimal growing conditions for crops by using *soil additives to adjust soil pH*. | **One way to raise the pH of the soil** is an additive made from pulverized chalk called *garden lime or agricultural limestone*.

Instructions:

1. Go to <http://www.monash.edu.au/lls/llonline/writing/science/paragraphs/index.xml> and complete the exercises on paragraphing.
2. Find an example of a paragraph from your own work that could be improved and copy it into the first blank space on page 2.
3. Use the space in the second box to revise the paragraph. Try to apply the tips above and what you learned from the exercises.

Original Paragraph:

Revised Paragraph: