

Bracken Business Communications Clinic

THREE WRITING BASICS: SENTENCE, PARAGRAPH, TITLE

Sentence = a subject and a predicate which together create meaning.

A sentence can be simple: *She shot him.* Or, it can be complex: *The gun discharged, sending a bullet across the room, where it ricocheted off the moss-covered stones of the fireplace and lodged itself into the flesh beneath his shoulder.* The more complex the sentence, the greater chance the writer will make an error. However, good writing features sentences that vary in length and structure. Strong verbs, sophisticated vocabulary, few pronoun references, and a sparing use of conjunctions (*e.g.*, and, but, or) make good sentences. Edit your sentences carefully for errors.

Paragraphs organize a piece of writing for the reader.

Each paragraph should have one main idea expressed in a topic sentence. The paragraph should be organized spatially, chronologically, or logically. Movement may be from general to specific, from specific to general, or from general to specific to general. All paragraphs should contain developed ideas: comparisons, examples, explanations, definitions, causes, effects, processes, or descriptions. Use transitions to connect ideas within a paragraph and to connect one paragraph to the next.

A good title is appropriate for the audience and the topic.

A strong title gives information, draws the reader into the text, and states a point of view on the topic. Sometimes business writing, particularly in marketing, calls for a catchy title or one that plays with words, ideas, and implications. However, readers should always be able to determine the topic and the purpose of your writing by its title. Review punctuation and capitalization when editing titles.