

## The 11-Sentence Paragraph

The 11-sentence paragraph is the building block of the formal essay. This model expects you to support a topic with three main points.

Each main point must be sufficiently developed with a cluster of information that follows the “point, proof, support” format. The key is that you select the most important information for each main point rather than writing everything you can think of about your topic.

The paragraph must adhere to the following format:

**Sentence 1: Topic Sentence** – introduces the main idea that will be discussed in the paragraph.

**Sentence 2: “Point”** – First point to support your topic (Point #1)

**A** **Sentence 3: “Proof”** – Quotation containing evidence from the text to *show* Point #1

**Sentence 4: “Support”** – a statement of analysis or interpretation that shows the link between Sentence 2 and Sentence 3.  
This sentence shows your insight into the text.

**Sentence 5: “Point”** – Second point to support your topic (Point #2)

**B** **Sentence 6: “Proof”** – Quotation containing evidence from the text to *show* Point #2

**Sentence 7: “Support”** – a statement of analysis or interpretation that shows the link between Sentence 5 and Sentence 6.  
This sentence shows your insight into the text.

**Sentence 8: “Point”** – Third point to support your topic (Point #3)

**C** **Sentence 9: “Proof”** – Quotation containing evidence from the text to *show* Point #3

**Sentence 10: “Support”** – a statement of analysis or interpretation that shows the link between Sentence 8 and Sentence 9.  
This sentence shows your insight into the text.

**Sentence 11: Concluding Sentence**

**TRANSITIONS:** Transition words **MUST** be used when you move from one cluster of information to the next. Transition words unify your paragraph as they show the progression of ideas. See the “Transition words” handout.

**QUOTATIONS:** When you introduce your quotations, you should do so in a variety of ways. The following methods are acceptable (pay careful attention to the punctuation marks):

a) *Introductory Phrase Format:*

According to Scout, “Atticus said the Ewells had been the disgrace of Maycomb for three generations. None of them had done an honest day’s work in his recollection” (Lee 30).

b) *“Run-in” Format:*

Although no one in Maycomb had seen Boo for years, “the neighborhood thought that when Mr. Radley went under Boo would come out,” but instead, Boo’s older brother, Nathan Radley moved back to town to carry out their father’s restrictions on Boo (Lee 12).

*Note: The citation is placed at the end of the paragraph even though the quotation ended earlier.*

c) *Colon/Introductory Clause Format*

Harper Lee explained Mr. Cunningham’s involvement with the mob using the following statement: “Mr. Cunningham’s basically a good man ... he just has blind spots along with the rest of us” (157).

*Note: If you use the author’s name in the sentence, you do not need to put it in the citation.*

### **EXEMPLAR 11-Sentence Paragraph:**

1. Mr. Arthur “Boo” Radley is truly a kind and compassionate person who should not be discriminated against by the prejudiced people of Maycomb. 2. During the story, Boo wants to make a connection with Scout and Jem, and he shows his kindness toward them by mending Jem’s pants after they were torn on the fence and by wrapping a blanket around Scout’s shoulders when Miss Maudie’s house was burning. 3. As Jem confesses to Atticus after the fire, “I swear to God he ain’t ever harmed us, he ain’t ever hurt us, he coulda cut my throat from ear to ear that night but he tried to mend my pants instead” (Lee 72). 4. Even though Boo is still a mystery to the children, they are beginning to realize that the stories told about him are not quite true. 5. Furthermore, Boo shows his interest in others by leaving presents for the children in the old tree. 6. Jem and Scout had found the following items in the tree: two soap carvings, “gray twine,” “chewing gum,” “a tarnished medal,” a watch, and an old knife (Lee 59-60). 7. Jem was so delighted by the idea that Boo was trying to communicate with them, that he cried when Mr. Nathan filled the tree hole with cement (63). 8. Scout was also fascinated by Boo’s kindness when she realized that he had saved Jem and her from Bob Ewell (270). 9. Before this incident, she had been terrified by the idea of Boo, but once she realizes what Boo is really like, she says that telling people about Boo’s role in Mr. Ewell’s death would be “sort of ... like shooting a mockingbird” (Lee 276). 10. Scout has finally learned the lesson that one must consider another’s perspective in order to understand him. 11. It is truly heartbreaking that Boo was made out to be immoral and incorrect as he was actually was one of the most big-hearted and philanthropic people in Maycomb.

*Andrew Plewis is the author of this handout on the 11-sentence paragraph. See bibliographic information below.*

#### Works Cited

Plewis, Andrew. "11 Sentence Paragraph." *MrPlewis* -. Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, n.d. Web. 24 June 2014. <<https://mrplewis.wikispaces.com/>>.