

M.E.A.L. Paragraph for Literary Analysis

MAIN IDEA. EVIDENCE. ANALYSIS. LINK.

Without each of these things, your audience will probably be unsatisfied with the paragraph you've served them. Preparing a MEAL always requires you to think of the people seated at your literary table, your audience

1. MAIN IDEA / THE BUN

The main idea should be included in the topic sentence. This is the idea that unifies the paragraph's content.

2. EVIDENCE / THE BASICS

Present evidence that supports your main idea above by summarizing, paraphrasing, or quoting an outside source.

3. ANALYSIS / THE MEAT

The analysis shows how or why the evidence you've given supports the main idea and offers an interpretation or importance of evidence.

4. LINK / ANOTHER BUN

Link with a sentence that re-states the main idea, or link the main idea of the paragraph to the thesis

Example



1. Main Idea (1) In Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, the narrator, Ishmael, grapples with the mystery of humankind's fascination with the sea as a proxy for humankind's fascination with the spiritual, or the supernatural.



2. Evidence (2) For Ishmael, the sea represents, in his words, "the ungraspable phantom of life" (20).



3. Analysis (3) We can infer from the supernatural connotations of this conception of the sea that when Ishmael speaks of the sea in other passages, he is at once concerning himself with the spiritual.



4. Link (4) Hence, although Ishmael is perhaps not a pious man, he feels the pull of spiritual concerns as surely as he feels the pull of the sea.