How to Build a Body Paragraph

THE FIVE COMPONENTS OF A BASIC BODY PARAGRAPH
FROM THE WRITING CENTER AT THE ARC

1. THE TOPIC SENTENCE
   The first sentence of your paragraph should introduce what part of your topic you will be discussing. If you mentioned your points in your thesis, the topic sentences will often mention which point this paragraph will be discussing. Your topic sentence also sets up a claim for the paragraph that you are trying to prove. Ex. One reason space exploration should be invested in is because we need a backup plan in case a global catastrophe happens on earth.

2. EVIDENCE INTRODUCTION
   Always try to introduce evidence before you give it (if your evidence is a quote, an introduction is mandatory). For example, if I am about to present a quote from an expert to support my claim, I need to say who the expert is. After you’ve introduced your evidence once in the paper, you don’t need to do it again. Ex. John Smith, an expert on the global resource crisis and climate change, has made several statements on the current state of earth’s climate and resources.

3. THE EVIDENCE
   Evidence is whatever you use to support the claim of your paragraph. Evidence can take several different forms, such as a cited study, a quote from an expert, news stories, or personal testimony. Ex. In his book The Global Resource Crisis, Smith demonstrates why a backup plan is needed: “With the current track we are on, the resources earth provides (such as food, water, clean air, etc.) will be completely depleted within approximately 900 years” (40).

4. YOUR ANALYSIS
   Whenever you use evidence, you have to analyze it. You cannot just insert evidence into your paper and not explain its significance. A few things to do when analyzing evidence is to explain what the evidence is trying to say, why it is important, and how it relates to your discussion. Ex. If what Smith claims is true, then in 900 years, humans will no longer be able to live on earth.

5. TIE-BACK TO THE THESIS
   After you’ve presented your evidence and analyzed it, you need to state how the evidence supports your thesis for your paper. This step is crucial because without the tie-back your evidence serves no purpose. Ex. Because of the possibility that earth will not be livable in the next few hundred years, investments should be made in space exploration to find other planets with the resources that humans need to continue living.