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| **Paragraphs** |
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| **Setting:** | Seminar |
| **Level:** | Levels 3-4 |
| **Activity duration:** | 25 minutes |
| **Guidance:** | See *‘Paragraph Construction Information Sheet’* for elements of paragraph construction/exercises |
| **Additional resources:**  | Paragraph Construction Information Sheet |
| **Outcomes:** * To enhance students’ ability to provide reasoning to support an argument
* To implement an approach to support students to improve their academic writing development in line with disciplinary knowledge
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| **Pre-task preparation:** * Select appropriate paragraphs of roughly 300 to 500 words (from previous student work or journal articles) to adapt the activity to your discipline (one per 2/3 students)
* Provide examples with and without a topic sentence (see ‘Paragraph Construction Information Sheet’)
* Can be part of a discussion of a concept (e.g. social justice, diversity, equality …)
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**Steps to implement the activity:** 1. In group of 2/3 for five minutes, ask students to discuss a given disciplinary concept related to their discipline (e.g. solar energy, organic vegetables, social media, social justice).
2. Explain the structure of an ideal academic paragraph using the first section in the ‘Paragraph Construction Support Sheet’. Make specific reference that topic sentences are extremely important for providing direction and purpose.
3. Show the students an example of a paragraph that has had its topic sentence removed. Allow the students some time to identify the topic and then show the students the complete paragraph.
4. Repeat the process to show the students a second example without the topic sentence.
5. This time, once they have identified the topic, ask them to suggest at least one topic sentence (This can be done in pairs or groups).
6. You can ask students to feedback to the group or ask the groups to swap paragraphs with another group to discuss strengths and weaknesses.

**Extension activities:** For a homework task, an introduction to review in a next session or for a future assessment task, ask students to write a paragraph about a disciplinary concept that they were discussing at the start of the session or a past session. Make sure the concept is not the same as the one given in the previous examples. |