



Drafting with the MEAL Plan

WHAT IS THE MEAL PLAN?

The MEAL plan is an acronym used in teaching writing to describe the essential parts of a strong, well developed paragraph.

It stands for Main Idea, Evidence/Example, Analysis, and Lead out/Link.

M: MAIN IDEA

The main idea of your paragraph is essentially what that paragraph is about.

- It should present the focus for that paragraph
- It should be in your own words
- It should connect to your thesis
- It should NOT come from your source materials



E: EVIDENCE/EXAMPLE

The evidence should support the point made in the Main Idea.

There are many different types of evidence, and often the type you will use will depend on what kind of essay you are writing.

- Personal Narrative?
 - Your evidence might be a specific detail, memory, or example from your own experience.
- Argumentative essay?
 - Your evidence might be support from an academic article or book. This support could be a quote, paraphrase, or summary from the source.
- Analysis?
 - Your evidence might be a quote from the primary source whether that's a short story, play, poem, novel, speech, or article.
- Descriptive?
 - Your evidence might be specific examples and details that illustrate your point.

A: ANALYSIS

The analysis should comment on the example you've provided.

"You should explain the information for your audience in your own words and make connections to your overall main idea as you work to help you audience understand why this information is relevant and important" ("Paragraphing: MEAL Plan").

L: LEAD OUT/LINK

The link/lead out should end your paragraph with a clear connection to your overall main idea and transition into your next paragraph.