

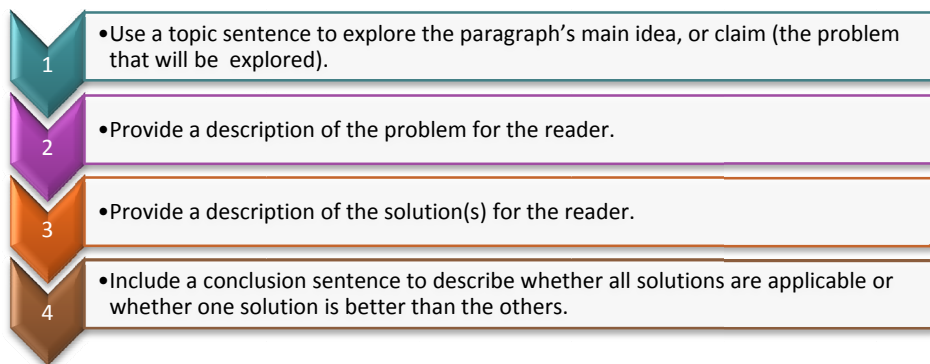
Drafting Body Paragraphs: Purpose-Based Organization Strategies Problem-Solution

There are several different organizational strategies designed for specific types of body paragraphs, including cause-effect, problem-solution, comparison-contrast and chronological. You must identify the purpose of the paragraph before you begin writing and then seek out the appropriate organizational strategy for writing a paragraph with that specific purpose. This handout discusses the **problem-solution strategy** in detail.



First, there's one thing you should know about this handout and its connection to another Academic Center handout. This handout is best used in conjunction with the Academic Center handout *Drafting Body Paragraphs: CECC: An Internal Organization Strategy*, which discusses a method of paragraph development that focuses on claim, evidence, commentary and conclusion. The **CECC method** accounts for the labeling in brackets of the example paragraphs in this handout. These labels in brackets are merely meant to show how each purpose-based organization strategy also corresponds with the CECC method.

A problem-solution paragraph identifies a problem, or problems, and recommends a plausible solution(s). This method of internal organization splits the paragraph, or paragraph block, into four easily-recognizable parts:



Now, let's look more closely at the second and third sections of the problem-solution organizational strategy.

The **description of the problem**, or second section of the paragraph, should provide sufficient evidence that a problem exists and address all questions that a reader may have about the problem, including who, what, when, where, why and how. The third section of the paragraph

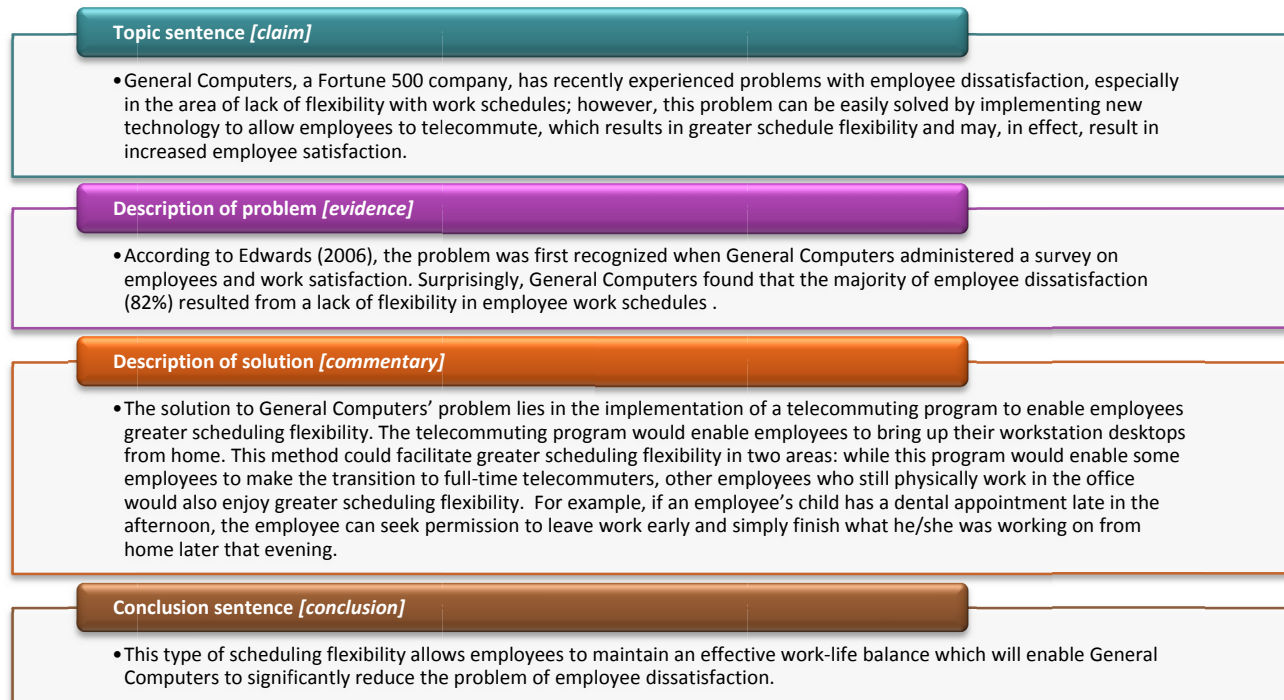


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explores the **recommended solution(s)**. If you wish to explore several solutions in this section, then you should explain the efficiency and/or effectiveness of each of the solutions. In this section you may also wish to arrive at a conclusion as to **why** one solution may be better than another solution. However, you can also reveal this information in the fourth section of the paragraph. It is your choice as a writer to decide where this information fits best based on your understanding of the reader's needs and expectations.

Let's take a look at an example of a successful problem-solution paragraph:



Note that each of the four primary sections of the problem-solution pattern is included in the example: topic sentence, problem description, solution description and conclusion sentence. Not only is this problem-solution pattern present, but you are also able to see the components of the **CECC pattern** emerging. For example, in the description of the problem section, the **evidence**, or statistics about employee dissatisfaction, cited according to Edwards, establish proof that there is a problem. The writer's **commentary**, which follows in the solution section, is his/her own proposed solution to the organization's problem.

More information on providing and signaling commentary is available in our handout *Signal Your Commentary on Source Material*.

A **paragraph block** is a series of several paragraphs which share the same topic sentence. The paragraph block has the same basic function as a single paragraph – to explore a main idea in detail. A paragraph block is used when the main idea being covered features several different components or is especially detailed. The paragraph block will still follow the same organizational pattern; the content will just be revealed over the course of several paragraphs rather than contained within a single paragraph.

In this example paragraph, the **cause** is the offering of rewards to children, the **effect** is the delay in egocentric growth, and the **description of the process** explains why the offering of rewards leads to a delay in egocentric growth.



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Not only is the cause and effect pattern present, but the components of the **CECC pattern** also emerge. For example, in the description of the process section, the **evidence**, or statements about how ego development relies on the ability to choose and control for oneself, is cited according to Smith. However, the writer's **commentary** which follows these statements interprets and summarizes this evidence for the reader.

As an aside, it might also be beneficial to take a closer look at the third section of this example – the description of the solution. Although this section provides commentary for the problem in a broad sense, it also features its own separate **claim – evidence – commentary** pattern. The first sentence of that section (The solution to General Computers' problem . . .) is the claim; the second sentence (The telecommuting program would enable employees to . . .) is the evidence; and the third and fourth sentences (This method could facilitate . . .) are the commentary. It's interesting to note that the CECC pattern is so foundational that it can emerge even within the body of a paragraph that already more broadly conforms to both the CECC pattern and the problem-solution organization strategy.

Although this handout discussed the problem-solution approach to paragraph organization, there are many other methods you can use to organize information within a specific paragraph. Additionally, while the information presented in this handout is tailored toward paragraph development, this organizational strategies discussed can be applied as overall organization strategies for research papers or can be used as organization strategies for paragraph blocks within a larger paper.

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