

A Good Paragraph Looks Like This:

Langston Hughes believed that dreams or goals should be pursued. During the Harlem Renaissance, this poet wrote several poems featuring the idea that you should keep working for what you want. For example, in "Mother to Son," a woman tells her son, "Don't you turn back. Don't you set down." She is telling her son that life can be like an upstairs journey. Even though it may be more difficult, he should keep striving upward. In "Harlem," he asks, "What happens to a dream deferred?" and finally wonders, "or does it explode?" The idea of a dream "exploding" suggests that a dream or goal that's put off creates so much stress that it could be compared to a violent reaction, exploding. So, the speaker must want the reader to consider putting off dreams as a negative thing. Even decades later, Hughes' message inspires generations of people to persevere instead of give up or put off their goals.

The **topic** sentence answers the question of the assignment. It should not use the word "I." Advanced: make a thematic statement that answers the question and states a universal idea. ↓

Then, use a sentence to explain the **background** of this idea by either summarizing the text or the situation you will be pulling examples from. ↓

Next, give **examples/evidence** usually quoted directly from the text. *Don't forget transitions and who/what is stating the quote.* ↓

Follow up the quote with an **explanation** that connects the quote with your main idea. ↓

Give at least one more **example/evidence** that also supports the main idea. Don't forget transitions and who/what is stating the quote. ↓

Don't forget to **explain** that quote, too. It helps to point out key words the reader should pay attention to. ↓

Finally, add a **concluding sentence** that both restates your main idea and what was meant to be the "take-away" or significance of the idea.