

Body Paragraphs are as Easy as PIE

Do you find yourself summarizing instead of asserting your voice in the larger conversation? Do you re-read your body paragraphs and realize that they aren't as cohesive as you thought? Using the **PIE** model can be helpful when forming, organizing, and revising your body paragraphs.



P - POINT - *Make your point!*

For your topic sentence, make a clear claim or statement that focuses your paragraph around one unified idea.

I - ILLUSTRATION - *Show your point!*

Illustrate the point with a quote, information, or a specific example from the text.

E - EXPLANATION - *Explain your point!*

Explain or elaborate on the point in context of the illustration. Discuss how the explanation and point relate to your thesis.

For your point, consider:

- What is your unified and focused idea?
- What is your interpretation of the text or topic? Does the point relate back to your thesis?
- Is your claim debatable?
- What can you say about the text or topic that goes beyond summary?

For your illustration, ask yourself:

- What are the important quotes or paraphrases from the text that showcase your point?
- What is a *specific* example?
- How are you setting up your "quote sandwich"? (See our handout for more information).
- Does the illustration relate directly to the point, illuminating or proving it?

For your explanation, think about:

- How does your point and illustration relate?
- What can you say that clarifies or refines your point as a result of your illustration?
- Are you offering your own ideas? Explanation should not include quotations or paraphrases.
- How does the explanation circle back to your thesis?

Depending on the type of essay you are writing, your "PIE" structure might look more like "PIIIIE" or "PIEIEIEE." This will be determined by the type(s) of illustration you select to showcase your main point, the amount of explanation necessary, and the constraints of the assignment.

Using PIE in ENGL 111 Assignments

SUMMARY RESPONSE	SYNTEHSIS ESSAY	ARGUMENT ESSAY
POINT: What is your response to a specific idea in the article are you responding to? ILLUSTRATION: What specific instances from the article illuminate or contradict your point? EXPLANATION: How or why did this illustration make you respond that way? Why does this point matter? How does this point relate to the thesis?	POINT: What is one theme from your thesis that authors discuss? What do they have to say about it? ILLUSTRATION: What are specific examples from at least two authors that center around the common theme? EXPLANATION: How do the specific examples you've selected illuminate the authors' point? How are they similar or different? How does the point connect with your thesis?	POINT: What is one claim that justifies your main argument (thesis)? ILLUSTRATION: What evidence can you use to support your claim? EXPLANATION: How does the evidence you've selected enhance your claim? Why does this claim matter? How does it connect with your thesis?

Read the sample body paragraph below to see how this writer uses the PIE model to discuss their point. She uses PIE, with the addition of a transition sentence, to cohesively explain her ideas.

Point	In order for students to be successful, they must attend class. Academic success is more difficult for people who do not complete this foundational first step. In his book, <i>Navigating the first year</i>, Grange (2019) argues that consistent attendance is imperative for student success. Mueller (2016) echoes this idea and explains that students who "miss more than 2 class sessions" really struggle to earn high grades (p.62). Because instructors cover important course content and assignment instructions during these sessions, it makes sense that students who attend will be better prepared to succeed. Similarly, when students skip class, they cannot access the important information or ask questions if they're confused. Therefore, successful students will prioritize regular attendance.
Illustration	
Explanation	