

Paragraphs

This summarises my video about paragraphs: <https://youtu.be/5Ere25S1yal>

Paragraphs structure the visual appearance and the content of a text, which allows the reader to quickly navigate through it.

There are three major recommendations for editing paragraphs:

1. **Content:** Each paragraph should be about **only one idea or thought**.
2. **Clarity:** The **take-home-message should come as early as possible** in the paragraph.
3. **Flow:** The end of one paragraph should naturally lead the reader to ask the question answered in the following paragraph.

As an example, I analyzed the introduction to

Thorup et al., 2020, ***Flying on Their Own Wings: Young and Adult Cuckoos Respond Similarly to Long-Distance Displacement During Migration***, Sci Rep 2020 May 7;10(1):7698
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-020-64230-x>

Disclaimer: I picked the paper because it showed up in my Pubmed-recommendations. Because it was published under a [Creative Common BY License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) that allows me to use it for educational purposes. I don't know the authors, and I have no scientific opinion about the content. I did like the writing, but my critique is not meant as a commentary on the author's abilities as academic writers.

Please download the original paper for reference.

Writing is an art and there are different schools and tastes involved. The following critique is therefore not meant to paint the authors in a bad light. I enjoyed reading the paper!

The first sentence in the introduction beautifully opens up the topic of a paper by using storytelling-elements. The authors introduce their study animal as a protagonist facing a vital task under difficult circumstances.

The transition between the first and the second paragraph could be improved by moving the main point that refers to the question raised at the end of the first paragraph up to the beginning of the second paragraph. The first paragraph ends hinting toward insufficient evidence about

navigation during migration. But the relevant findings that would satisfy a reader are hidden in the second to last sentence of the second paragraph.

The second paragraph then ends by hinting toward contradictions in the published findings. But these findings aren't mentioned until deep into the third paragraph and the contradictions aren't addressed at all. Instead, they introduce the methods - which they applied, too - which I don't think is a fitting place in the text to do so.

A good example of flow then is found at the beginning of the fourth paragraph when the authors directly refer to the subject they brought up at the end of the third paragraph ("Such an ability"). They also finally introduce relevant findings, but - again - don't mention what is contradictory until late into the paragraph.

In the final paragraph, the authors tell us what they did. I would have liked a reminder/outlook of what the results and findings are.

Overall, I think it's a nice introduction. To increase clarity and flow I would mention the take-home messages earlier in each paragraph.