

Paragraph Considerations

1. Past tense verbs – Martin Luther initiated the Protestant Reformation.
2. Usage of is, are, was, were – truly necessary?
Ex: This was a major development leading to the Scientific Revolution >>> This major development led to the Scientific Revolution
3. Topic sentence – too narrow, too broad
The Scientific Revolution was caused by trade.
Is your entire paragraph about *trade*?
4. Relevant information – if it has nothing to do with topic sentence, leave it out
Ex. Just because you know a lot about the Renaissance, Reformation, if it has nothing to do with the assignment “Causes of the Scientific Revolution” then leave it out.
5. Unnecessary words – don’t use fifteen words when three will do
Ex. This happened during the Medieval Era where the first university was born this university’s strength was to gather scientists in this school and when this happened it started a trade where people shared ideas or passed on ideas to others and they improved on it. >>>>>> During the Middle Ages, scientists gathered in universities where they shared ideas.
6. Word choice – make sure word you choose is actually what you mean
Ex. As the Protestant Reformation occurred throughout Europe... “Occurred” sounds too passive – maybe “spread across” or “stretched across” or “transformed”
7. Capitalize Eras – “Scientific Revolution”, “Middle Ages”
8. Transitional phrases – reader should know that you’re moving on to a new point
9. Commas come where there is a pause in speech
Ex. “Though many people like chicken, I prefer pork.”
10. Time period – 1500-1599 is the 16th century. We live in the 100 years before 2100, so we live in the 21st century.
11. Series agreement – when you make a list, make sure the list is equal and in the same verb tense
Not: He explored alchemy, witchcraft and investigating the arts is a useful strategy.
Not: He played with spiders, danced with butterflies, and digs for old bones.
12. Run-on sentences – don’t just list facts and think that I’ll figure out what you mean
13. Conclusion – is your last sentence new evidence or does it wrap up your thoughts?

How is the following paragraph strong? How can it be improved?

With the Scientific Revolution emerged a completely new way of looking at situations and solutions. Prior to this birth of Scientific thought, people looked to alchemy, astronomy, and witchcraft. They ignorantly believed that if they wished to improve their way of life, they could make gold out of other natural substances, predict the future through the stars, and use witchcraft to kill demons. One reason for the Revolution was the contributions that the previous two eras provided. The Renaissance focused on humans and making life better, reintroducing Greek and Roman ideas – the beginning of scientific thought, and because of Martin Luther’s influence, they now had solid evidence that the church could be wrong. Another reason the Scientific Revolution spread was because of trade. Ideas could be mixed and experimented with to develop the best solutions. The Scientific Revolution was a huge step towards the evolution towards the ideas we share today.