MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Mark Light

From:

Subject:

Date:

Introduction

There’s an old saying about how to make a good impression, “Be bright, be brief, be gone” ([Light, 2011, p. 202](#_ENREF_2)). In the first paragraph, introduce the topic with a sentence that hooks the reader. If you don’t get the reader’s attention here, they won’t read anything more. In addition, you should show a clear plan of action for what you are going to do in the paper.

Topic Heading[[1]](#footnote-1)

People often read just the first sentence of paragraphs. That’s why you should summarize the whole point of the paragraph in that sentence. Think of it as your headline. Then prove your headline with examples and arguments in the next few sentences. Limit length to about four sentences (about 75 words). Keep the paragraphs per topic to four or fewer. Remember Albert Einstein’s dictum, “Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler” ([Frank, 2001, p. 791](#_ENREF_1)).

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Summary

The closing paragraph is as important as the opening because it is where you briefly summarize what you have argued. It is also where you lead your reader out of the paper, which is why some people reconnect with the hook that started the paper. Capture the major points from each of your topic sections.

Don’t forget that clear and crisp writing is important; be sure to use your spell and grammar checker, and proof carefully . . . twice. Reading the paper aloud is a good tactic for spotting problems. Another way is to have someone else read it aloud to you.

Pascal wrote, “I have made this letter longer than usual because I lack the time to make it short” ([Frank, 2001, p. 956](#_ENREF_1)). Today he might say keep it short and sweet; that’s the trick to a good writing.

Appendices[[2]](#footnote-2)

References[[3]](#footnote-3)

Frank, Leonard Roy. (2001). *Random House Webster's Quotationary*. New York: Random House.

Light, Mark. (2011). *Results now for nonprofits: Purpose, strategy, operations, and governance*. Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons.

1. Use topic headings to guide the reader. “Topic” is not an appropriate heading on its own; change the term to accurately represent the topic you are discussing in the paragraphs that follow it. Topic headings are generally useful when you have more than one paragraph in a section *or* where there is a major shift of focus that could confuse the reader. If in doubt about whether to use a topic heading, use it. By the way, this discussion is a good example of a footnote, which comments on something in the text. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Delete this heading if there are not any appendices. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. If you have in-text citations, you must have a references section. There are resources about APA 6th in the resources section of the course homepage. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)