**Category:** Revising Effectively

**Title:** Revising Body Paragraphs

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\*\* adapted from *The Curious Writer* by Bruce Ballenger, “Untangling Paragraphs,” pg. 579

**Lesson Objectives:** This lesson helps students to see that a good paragraph is like a mini-essay. Additionally, it will help them to strengthen their organization and the development of their argument.

**Preparation and Materials:** Students will need one copy of a draft of an essay and three different colored pens/pencils.

**Procedures**: Instruct students to through the following steps to revise each of the body paragraphs in the draft:

1. Underline your thesis, and switch drafts with a partner.
2. Read through your partner’s essay, and underline the topic sentence of every body paragraph.
3. Now, read through each body paragraph again and do the following for each paragraph:
   1. With a different colored pen/pencil, underline the information that supports the point the author is making in that paragraph.
   2. With another colored pen/pencil, underline the information that does not support the main point of the paragraph. You should also underline information that does not relate to the topic of the paragraph.
4. Return the draft to your partner.

Once students have their own draft again, ask them to note what their partner marked and use the following questions to help them revise:

1. For the information that does not support/relate to the topic sentences, do you need to add an explanation for how it connects to that topic? Do you need to move the information somewhere else in the essay? Do you need to delete it entirely?
2. Read through the topic sentence of each body paragraph. Does it clearly cover everything in that paragraph? Is it too broad? Too specific? Does it support the thesis?
3. Read through the last sentence of each body paragraph. Does it effectively wrap up the ideas in that paragraph and prepare the reader to move on to the next paragraph?
4. Check the length of every paragraph in your essay. Are any too long (do any go on for a full page or more)? How can you separate ideas to break down paragraphs? Are any paragraphs too short (just a few sentences)? What can you add to further develop these shorter paragraphs? Or do you need to insert that shorter paragraph into another paragraph?
5. Think about transitions between paragraphs. Is the connection from one body paragraph to another explained?