Writing effective body paragraphs may not be easy, but it can be helpful to follow a plan that helps you remember that each part of your paragraph has an important role to play. That plan is the MEAL plan, where:

* **M** = **Main idea**. Usually (though there can be exceptions), the main idea is stated explicitly in the first sentence of the paragraph. Stick to one idea per paragraph, and start a new paragraph when you start a new idea.
* **E** = **Evidence**, or the details that support the main idea. You can have as many details as you need. Sometimes one juicy piece of evidence is enough to make the point convincing. A good rule of thumb is three details per idea, but this is a “rule” that is made to be broken. Use your good judgment when deciding when you have enough convincing evidence. Also remember that evidence can take many forms, depending on the topic and your purpose for writing:
  + - sensory descriptions
    - examples
    - anecdotal evidence or short narrative based on personal experience
    - quotations from experts or researched sources
    - facts
    - statistics
* **A** = **Analysis**, or the explanation for how the details support the main idea. This analysis is crucial for helping your readers understand how the evidence is relevant.
* **L** = **Link**. This element is not included in all paragraphs, but it can be very helpful to remind your reader what the main idea of the paragraph is and to tie all of the evidence together, especially if the paragraph is very rich with a wide variety of evidence.

Thesis of Essay: Even with the best planning, however, tent camping can be an extremely frustrating experience due to uncontrolled factors such as bad weather, wildlife encounters, and equipment failures.

Another problem likely to be faced during a camping trip is run-ins with wildlife, which can range from mildly annoying to dangerous. Minor inconveniences include mosquitoes and ants. The swarming of mosquitoes can literally drive annoyed campers indoors. If an effective repellant is not used, the camper can spend the entire night scratching, which will only worsen the itch. Ants do not usually attack campers, but keeping them out of the food can be quite an inconvenience. Although these insects cause minor discomfort, some wildlife encounters are potentially dangerous. There are many poisonous snakes in the United States, such as the water moccasin and the diamond-back rattlesnake. When hiking in the woods, the camper must be careful where he or she steps. Also, the tent must never be left open. Snakes, searching for either shade from the sun or shelter from the rain, can enter a tent. An encounter between an unwary camper and a surprised snake can prove to be fatal. Run-ins can range from unpleasant to dangerous, but the camper must realize that they are sometimes inevitable.

\*Paragraph adapted from: http://www.sandhills.edu/english/essaybasics/5\_paragraph\_essay.html