

Paragraph

Definition

A paragraph is a group of sentences related to one core idea and arranged in a logical order.

Types of Paragraph

Descriptive paragraph the writer describes a person, a place or a thing.

Example paragraph the writer explains a topic by giving examples.

Process paragraph the writer explains how to do something step by step.

Opinion paragraph the writer expresses his or her feelings, ideas, and opinions about a topic.

Narrative paragraph the writer tells a story.

Basic Rules

- keep one idea to one paragraph
- supporting information within the paragraph
- a new idea in a new paragraph

Traits of an effective paragraph:

1. Unity
2. Coherence
3. A Topic Sentence
4. Controlling Idea
5. Adequate Development

1. Unity

- entire paragraph, single focus
- connection between beginning and ending

2. Coherence

- coherence makes the paragraph understandable
- create coherence through **logical bridges** and **verbal bridges**

Logical Bridges

- the same idea is carried over from sentence to sentence
- successive sentences can be constructed in parallel form

Verbal Bridges

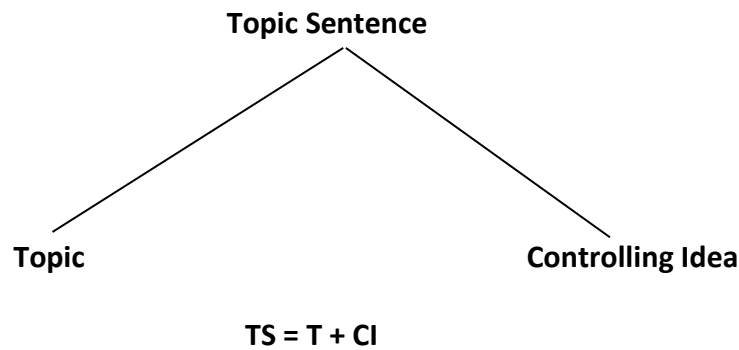
- key words can be repeated in other sentences
- synonymous words can be repeated in other sentences
- pronouns can be used to refer to nouns in previous sentences
- transitional words can be used to link ideas from different sentences

3. Topic sentence or theme statement

- the main idea or thesis the paragraph is going to deal with
- can occur anywhere in the paragraph (as the first sentence, the last sentence, or somewhere in the middle)
- not all paragraphs have clear-cut topic sentences
- If you want readers to see your point immediately, open/begin with the topic sentence.

4. Controlling Idea

- Every topic sentence will have a topic and a controlling idea.
- The controlling idea shows the direction the paragraph will take.



Examples

A good topic sentence should include either of the following:

one clear topic

weak: It's important to have friends, and also to do well in school.

strong: I don't think I shall ever have a better friend than Heather.

an opinion or idea about the topic

weak: I have been studying karate.

strong: Studying karate has given me strength and self-confidence.

a good topic sentence should not be:

too broad (too much to write about)

weak: Australia is an interesting country.

strong: On my Visit to Australia, I saw many unusual animals.

too narrow (not enough to write about / is just a fact)

weak: School starts at 8:30 a.m.

strong: Getting ready for school in the morning is more difficult than any of my classes.

5. Paragraph Organization

A typical paragraph has a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence.

- The **topic sentence** introduces the topic and tells what the writer will say about the topic.
- The **supporting sentences** further explain and support the topic sentence.
- The **concluding sentence** often repeats the information in the topic sentence in a different way.

6. Adequate development

For elaboration of the topic:

- Use examples and illustrations
- Cite data (facts, statistics, evidence, details, and others)
- Examine testimony such as quotes and paraphrases
- Use an anecdote or story
- Define terms in the paragraph
- Compare and contrast
- Evaluate causes and reasons
- Examine effects and consequences
- Analyse the topic
- Describe the topic
- Offer a chronology of an event (time segments)