RECOGNIZING THE PARTS OF A PARAGRAPH
WHAT IS A PARAGRAPH?

In its simplest sense, a paragraph is **a collection of sentences that relate to a particular topic.** A solid block of text covering a whole page can be quite discouraging for a reader, so each page of academic writing is generally be broken up into several paragraphs. There are no specific rules about exactly how long a paragraph should be, and the precise number of sentences in a paragraph is not necessarily important. However, a key thing to remember is that a paragraph should **introduce, develop and possibly conclude a distinct area of the topic** under consideration.

Look at the previous paragraph as an example of a good paragraph. The first sentence, 'In its simplest…', **introduces the topic**. This sentence is known as a **"Topic Sentence"**. The next two sentences, 'A solid block… and 'There are no…', **develop this idea and give more information.** These sentences are called **"Supporting Sentences"**. The last sentence, 'However, a key…', **concludes the paragraph** by giving an important piece of information related to the idea introduced in the first sentence. This final sentence can be in the form of a **"Concluding Sentence" or a "Transition Sentence".**

Topic Sentences

A well-organized paragraph supports or develops a single controlling idea, which is expressed in a sentence called **the topic sentence**
- the *topic sentence* states the main idea of the paragraph
- the *topic sentence* not only names the **topic** of the paragraph, but it also limits the topic to one or two specific areas that can be discussed completely in the space of a single paragraph
- the specific area is called the **controlling idea**

EXAMPLE: TOPIC   CONTROLLING IDEA
          <u>Gold</u>, a precious metal, is prized for <u>**two important characteristics.**</u>

Supporting Sentences

The remaining sentences in a paragraph develop the topic sentence. **Supporting Sentences** are used to:

- EXPLAIN
- DEFINE
- ELABORATE
- GIVE FACTS
- DESCRIBE
- GIVE EXAMPLES
- GIVE REASONS
- GIVE QUOTES

FUNCTION:	SENTENCE:
ELABORATION	First of all, gold has a lustrous beauty that is resistant to corrosion.
ELABORATION	Therefore, it is suitable for jewelry, coins, and ornamental purposes.
EVIDENCE	Gold never needs to be polished and will remain beautiful forever.
EXAMPLE	For example, a Macedonian coin remains as untarnished today as the day it was minted twenty-three centuries ago.
ELABORATION	Another important characteristic of gold is its usefulness to industry and science.
EVIDENCE	For many years, it has been used in hundreds of industrial applications.
EXAMPLE	The most recent use of gold is in astronauts' suits.
EXPLANATION	Astronauts wear gold-plated heat shields for protection outside the spaceship.
CONCLUSION / TRANSITION	In conclusion, gold is treasured not only for its beauty but also its utility.

Paragraph Structure

The model paragraph contains all the elements of a good paragraph.

Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics. First of all, gold has a **lustrous** beauty that is resistant to corrosion. Therefore, it is suitable for jewelry, coins, and ornamental purposes. Gold never needs to be polished and will remain beautiful forever. For example, a Macedonian coin remains as untarnished today as the day it was minted twenty-three centuries ago. Another important characteristic of gold is its usefulness to industry and science. For many years, it has been used in hundreds of industrial applications. The most recent use of gold is in astronauts' suits. Astronauts wear gold-plated heat shields for protection outside spaceships. In conclusion, gold is treasured not only for its beauty but also for its utility.

lustrous: very shiny

Read the TOPIC SENTENCE for the paragraph below, and then arrange the remaining sentences that follow so they are in the correct order by putting the number 1, 2, 3 on the line in front of each of the sentences (a - e).

There are two (2) sentences that DO NOT SUPPORT the topic – leave them blank or put an X on the line in front of those two (2) sentences.

Write ONLY ONE NUMBER for each line / sentence.
(Points are awarded for the correct numbers on the correct lines, and there is only one correct order)

TOPIC SENTENCE: *An automated teller machine (ATM) is a convenient miniature bank.*

___   a) Money is often defined as the coins or bills with their value on them that are used to buy things.

___   b) It enables customers to do several banking transactions twenty-four hours a day.

___   c) In addition, a customer can transfer funds between accounts or get a cash advance on a credit card.

___   d) An automat is a restaurant where you buy food from boxes whose doors open when money is put in.

___   e) For example, a customer can use an ATM to deposit money and withdraw a limited amount of cash.

NOTE → on the B2 Exam, this part ("Recognizing the Parts of a Paragraph") will look similar to what you see here (except there will be 7 sentences – of which, you will only need 5).

PRACTICE 2: Recognizing Topic & Supporting Sentences
Arrange the supporting sentences in the following paragraphs so that they are in the correct order.

TOPIC SENTENCE: *All around the world living in big cities creates serious problems for people.*
SUPPORTING SENTENCES:

___   a) To sum up, air pollution and traffic jams are two important problems that people living in big cities have.

___   b) The first problem is air pollution.

___   c) For this reason, many inhabitants waste their time in traffic, and they are negatively affected by this situation.

___   d) Secondly, traffic is an important problem for the people living in big cities.

___   e) There are now more and more cars on roads, and this causes traffic jams in many parts of the cities.

___   f) For example, in Istanbul, many people have cars and cars are one reason why the air is polluted.

TOPIC SENTENCE: *Bicycles are popular today in many countries for three reasons.*
SUPPORTING SENTENCES:

___   a) Bikes are generally not expensive to buy, and they are quite cheap to fix.

___   b) In cities, many people prefer bikes to cars because unlike cars, with a bicycle, they never have to wait in traffic.

___   c) To illustrate, in Holland, people think riding a bicycle is a better way of keeping fit and staying healthy than other sports.

___   d) In brief, having a bicycle is beneficial for people for different reasons.

___   e) First, most of the people use bicycles to exercise.

___   f) Finally, they are suitable for city life.

___   g) The second reason is money.

Read the following topic sentence:

TOPIC SENTENCE: *My best friend Naomi is one of the busiest people I know.*

WHAT is the TOPIC?

WHAT is the CONTROLLING IDEA?

For the sentences below (1 - 10):
Put a √ next to the sentences that support the topic sentence.
Put an **X** next to the sentences that are not related to it (do not support the topic sentence).

___ 1) She wakes up early every morning to work at the convenience store next to the station.

___ 2) She has long black hair.

___ 3) Every day at five o'clock she baby-sits her little brother until her mother gets home from work.

___ 4) She goes to English conversation lessons several times a week.

___ 5) Most people like her because she is friendly.

___ 6) Her mother is very busy, too.

___ 7) She is a volunteer teaching Japanese to children who come from abroad.

___ 8) Naomi's boyfriend is busy, too.

___ 9) Last year she passed the FCE exam.

___ 10) She is active in her tennis club.

TOPIC SENTENCE OR PARAGRAPH LEADER
   • is usually the first sentence which presents the main idea of your paragraph.
   • is often short, clear, simple and to the point.
   • is followed by explanations, reasons and examples which support the topic.

The Topic Sentence Must Connect to the Main Body of the Paragraph
Many fast-food chains make their profits from adding a special ingredient called "forget sauce" to their foods. Made largely from edible oil products, this condiment is never listed on the menu. In addition, this well-kept industry secret is the reason why ingredients are never listed on the packaging of victuals sold by these restaurants. 'Forget sauce' has a chemical property which causes temporary amnesia in consumers. After spending too much money on barely edible food <u>bereft</u> of [without] any nutritional value, most consumers swear they will never repeat such a disagreeable experience. Within a short period, however, the chemical in 'forget sauce' takes effect, and they can be depended upon to return and spend, older but no wiser.

Analysis of the Paragraph:
Look at how the topic sentence links to ideas developed in the paragraph.

• **Many fast food chains make their profits from adding a special ingredient called 'forget sauce' to their foods**

• Made from largely edible oil products, this condiment is never listed on the menu

• In addition, this well kept industry secret is the reason why ingredients are never listed on the packaging of products sold by these restaurants.

• Forget sauce has a chemical property which causes temporary amnesia in consumers.

• After spending too much money on barely edible food bereft of any nutritional value, most consumers swear they will never repeat such a disagreeable experience.

• Within a short period, however, the chemical in forget sauce takes effect, and they can be depended upon return and spend, older but no wiser.

SUPPLEMENT: INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPHS

The introductory paragraph of any paper, long or short, should start with a sentence that gets the interest of readers. In a typical essay / academic text, that first sentence leads into two or three other statements that provide details about the writer's subject or process. All of these sentences build up to the essay's thesis statement.

The introduction paragraph typically has the following:
- Attention-Getter (Lead-in) (1 sentence – 2 sentences maximum)
- Set Up for the Thesis (minimum: 2 – 3 sentences)
- Thesis Statement (Essay Map) (1 sentence)

Attention Getters & Lead-ins
To get a paper off to a great start, writers should try to have a first sentence that engages their reader. This first sentence should be broadly related to the topic of the essay.

Ways writers can begin:
- Paradoxical or Intriguing Statement
- Rhetorical Question
- Statement of the Problem
- Shocking Statement or Statistic
- Anecdote
- Proverb, Maxim, or Strong Statement

Set Up for a Thesis
After the attention getter or lead-in, writers need to gradually narrow the broad subject towards the thesis.

Sentences used for gradually narrowing can:
- provide **background** information
- **explain** underlying information
- **describe** the complexity of the issue
- introduce various **layers** of the subject
- help **transition** from these more broad ideas to the narrow thesis

Thesis Statements
A thesis statement manages to encapsulate an essay's main argument in a succinct, one-sentence comment. Beginner writers often times find it useful to create an essay map thesis, where the thesis briefly lists the areas that will be discussed in the essay.

A Thesis Statement:
- has a clearly stated **opinion** → but **does not directly announce** the opinion ("In this essay I will...")
- is **narrow** enough to write a focused essay → but also **broad** enough to write at least 3 body paragraphs
- is **clearly stated** in **specific** terms
- is **easily recognized** as the **main idea**
- is forceful and **direct**
- is **not softened** with useless / overused phrases ("in my opinion" or "I think")
- **can list** the 3 main points that will be made.

In the Introduction Paragraph NEVER EVER EVER. . .
- bluntly **announce** the essay's **intent** ("In this essay I will...")
- make **unreasonable** statements
- **apologize** for the material that is being written ("In my humble opinion...")
- go into a **detailed account** of the writing
- include **random information** that has nothing to do with the essay
- use an **encyclopedia or dictionary definition** ("According to Webster's...")
- **dilly-dally** (delay - hesitate) → get to it - move confidently into the essay.

PRACTICE: SAMPLE INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH
Look at the sentences below (a - f) and put them in the correct order for an introduction paragraph. Write the number for each sentence (1 - 6) on the line in front of the letters.

___ a) If every US citizen had such a card, airlines could screen for terrorists more effectively than they do now and avoid procedures that single out individuals solely on the basis of race. **[Thesis Statement]**

___ b) While some airports began to target passengers based solely on their Middle Eastern origins, others instituted random searches instead. **[Background – Explaining / Describing]**

___ c) Now many experts in the government and in airport security are recommending the use of a national ID card or Safe Traveler Card. **[Narrowing transition – ready to state thesis]**

___ d) After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on New York's World Trade Towers and the Pentagon, the debate surrounding racial profiling in airports intensified. **[Attention-Getter / Lead-in]**

___ e) Many people believed that profiling was the best way to identify possible terrorists, but many others worried about violations of civil liberties. **[Background – Explaining / Describing]**

___ f) Neither of these techniques seems likely to eliminate terrorism. **[Transition – beginning to set-up thesis]**