Paragraph Structure

Mentimeter

What is a paragraph?

Waiting for responses ...

Paragraph

- A paragraph is a group ofrelated sentences that discuss one (and usually only one) main idea.
- A paragraph can be as short as one sentence or as long as ten sentences. The number of sentences is unimportant
- The paragraph should be long enough to develop the main idea clearly.
- A paragraph may stand by itself or one part of a longer piece of writing such as an essay or a book.

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Gold

[1]Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics. [2]First of all, gold has a lustrous[1] beauty that is resistant to corrosion.[2] [3]Therefore, it is suitable for jewelry, coins, and ornamental purposes. [4]Gold never needs to be polished and will remain beautiful forever. [5]For example, a Macedonian coin remains as untarnished[3] today as the day it was made 25 centuries ago. [6]Another important characteristic of gold is its usefulness to industry and science. [7]For many years, it has been used in hundreds of industrial applications, such as photography and dentistry. [8]The most recent use of gold is in astronauts' suits. [9]Astronauts wear gold-plated heat shields for protection when they go outside spaceships in space. [10]In conclusion, gold is treasured not only for its beauty but also for its utility.

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What two main points does the writer make about the topic?

Waiting for responses ...

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In which two sentences does the writer say that there are twomain points?

Waiting for responses

Mentimeter

What examples does the writer use to support each point?

Waiting for responses ...

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Three Parts of a Paragraph

- Topic Sentence
- Supporting Sentences
- Concluding Sentences

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What is a topic sentence?

Waiting for responses ...

Topic sentence

- Main idea of the paragraph.
- It not only names the topic of the paragraph
- but it also limits the topic to one specific area that can be discussed completely in the space of a single paragraph

Mentimeter

TOPIC

CONTROLLING IDEA

Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics.

Features of a topic sentence

- A topic sentence should be a complete sentence.
- A topic sentence contains both a topic and a controlling idea.
- A topic sentence is the most general statement in the paragraph because it gives only the main idea. It does not give any specific details.

Examples of general statements.

- The Arabic origin of many English words is not always obvious. (General)
- The slang expression so long (meaning "good-bye") is probably a corruption of the Arabic salaam. (too specifiic)
- English has been influenced by other languages. (too general)

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Location of topic sentences.

- The topic sentence is usually (but not always) the first sentence in a paragraph.
- Experienced writers sometimes put topic sentences in other locations, but the best spot is usually right at the beginning.

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Synonyms

Synonyms, words that have the same basic meaning, do not always have the same emotional meaning. For example, the words *stingy* and *frugal* both mean "careful with money." However, calling someone stingy is an insult, but calling someone frugal is a compliment. Similarly, a person wants to be slender but not skinny, aggressive but not pushy. Therefore, you should be careful in choosing words because many so-called synonyms are not really synonymous at all.

Mentimeter

Medical Miracles to Come

By the year 2009, a vaccine[1] against the common cold will have been developed. By the same year, the first human will have been successfully cloned.[2] By the year 2014, parents will be able to create designer children. Genetic therapy will be able to manipulate genes for abilities, intelligence, and hair, eye, and skin color. By 2020, most diseases will be able to be diagnosed and treated at home, and by 2030, cancer and heart disease will have been wiped out. These are just a few examples of the medical miracles that are expected in the next few decades.

Mentimeter

topic sentence

Read All About It

controlling idea

The daily newspaper provides a valuable source of information. As everyone knows, a town's daily paper reports the news from around the world. Readers gain knowledge of world affairs by reading about wars starting and stopping, the national economy, and tragedies that befall people everyday like auto accidents and home fires. Readers also acquire basic information that is needed to be an informed citizen such as the workings of Congress and the geography of places all around the world. For instance, when the Pope visited Cuba, Americans learned about the history and geography of the island. Just as important to many readers, the newspaper reports on the world of sports and entertainment. Many subscribers eagerly await the morning paper to find out the latest box scores of favorite teams or the television and movie listings for the day. Also, the newspaper predicts the weather, and the advertising helps readers save money by publishing information on the latest sales. Most important, the newspaper connects us to our community by publishing important announcements like births, deaths, weddings, and the events occurring in town like fairs and government meetings. Reading the newspaper helps us develop our intelligence as citizens by providing us with important information about our world.

Supporting sentences

Conclusion

Mentimeter

A. Remember that a topic sentence is a complete sentence and is neither too general nor too specific.

Step 1 Read the sentences in each group, and decide which sentence is the best topic sentence. Write *best TS* (for "best topic sentence") on the line next to it.

Step 2 Decide what is wrong with the other sentences. They may be too general, or they may be too specific, or they may be incomplete sentences. Write *too general, too specific*, or *incomplete* on the lines next to them.

The first one has been done for you as an example.

Mentimeter

Group 1

too specific	a. A lunar eclipse is an omen of a coming disaster.
too general	b. Superstitions have been around forever.
best TS	c. People hold many superstitious beliefs about the moon.
incomplete	d. Is made of green cheese.

Mentimeter

_____ a. The history of astronomy is interesting.

_____ b. Ice age people recorded the appearance of new moons by making scratches in animal bones.

_____ c. For example, Stonehenge in Britain, built 3500 years ago to track the movement of the sun.

_____ d. Ancient people observed and recorded lunar and solar events in different ways.

Mentimeter

_____ a. It is hard to know which foods are safe to eat nowadays.

_____ b. In some large ocean fish, there are high levels of mercury.

_____ c. Undercooked chicken and hamburger may carry *E. coli* bacteria.

_____ d. Not to mention mad cow disease.

_____ e. Food safety is an important issue.

Mentimeter

_____ a. Hybrid automobiles more economical to operate than gasoline-powered cars.

_____ b. The new hybrid automobiles are very popular.

_____ c. Hybrid cars have good fuel economy because a computer under the hood decides to run the electric motor, the small gasoline engine, or the two together.

_____ d. The new hybrid automobiles are popular because of their fuel economy.

Mentimeter

_____ a. The North American Catawba Indians of the Southeast and the Tlingit of the Northwest both see the rainbow as a kind of bridge between heaven and earth.

_____ b. A rainbow seen from an airplane is a complete circle.

_____ c. Many cultures interpret rainbows in positive ways.

_____ d. Rainbows are beautiful.

_____ e. The belief that you can find a pot of gold at a rainbow's end.

Mentimeter

Underline the words that express the controlling idea of each topic sentence.

1. Credit cards can get consumers into trouble.
2. Computers are becoming an important part of the modern home.
3. Raising a child alone is a challenge.
4. My next-door neighbor is one of the kindest people I've ever known.
5. There should not be a required attendance policy in college.

Mentimeter

Remember that the topic sentence is the most general statement in a paragraph. Read the following scrambled paragraphs and decide which sentence is the topic sentence. Write *TS* on the line next to that sentence.

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Paragraph 1

_____ a. A notes/memo function lets you make quick notes to yourself.

_____ b. Other capabilities include word processing, spreadsheets, and e-mail.

_____ c. A voice recorder that uses a built-in microphone and speaker works like a tape recorder.

_____ d. Basic tools include a calendar to keep track of your appointments, an address and phone number book, to-do lists, and a calculator.

_____ e. MP3 playback lets you listen to digital music files, and a picture viewer lets you look at digital photos.

_____ f. Most personal digital assistants (PDAs) have tools for basic tasks as well as for multimedia functions.

_____ g. A few models also include a built-in digital camera and keyboard.

Mentimeter

Paragraph 2

_____ a. Twelve years after *Sputnik*, the United States caught up by becoming the first nation to land a man on the moon.

_____ b. The Europeans have joined the competition, vowing to land European astronauts on the moon by 2025 and on Mars by 2035.

_____ c. The number of nations competing in the "space race" has grown since the early days of space exploration.

_____ d. China joined the competition in 2003 when it launched *Shenzhou 5*.

_____ e. Initially, the former Soviet Union took the lead when it sent the first man into Earth orbit in the spaceship *Sputnik* in 1957.

_____ f. For almost 50 years, the United States and Russia were the only competitors in the contest to explore space using manned spacecraft.

Mentimeter

Paragraph 3

_____ a. Another important change was that people had the freedom to live and work wherever they wanted.

_____ b. The earliest significant change was for farming families, who were no longer isolated.

_____ c. The final major change brought by the automobile was the building of superhighways, suburbs, huge shopping centers, and theme parks such as Disney World in Florida.

_____ d. The automobile revolutionized the way of life in the United States.

_____ e. The automobile enabled them to drive to towns and cities comfortably and conveniently.

_____ f. In fact, people could work in a busy metropolitan city and drive home to the quiet suburbs.

Mentimeter

Paragraph 4

_____ a. In time, this melted part rises as magma.[1]

_____ b. The formation of a volcanic eruption is a dramatic series of events.

_____ c. As the plate[2] sinks, friction and Earth's heat cause part of it to melt.

_____ d. The magma produces heat, steam, and pressure.

_____ e. First of all, most volcanoes are formed where two plates collide.[3]

_____ f. Then one of the plates is forced under the other and sinks.

_____ g. When the heat, steam, and pressure from the magma finally reach the surface of Earth, a volcanic eruption occurs.

Topic Sentence & Controlling Idea

- The topic names the subject of the paragraph
- The controlling idea limits or controls the topic to a specific area that you can discuss in the space of a single paragraph.

Mentimeter

TOPIC CONTROLLING IDEA

Convenience foods are easy to prepare.

The reader immediately knows that this paragraph will discuss how easy it is to prepare convenience foods and perhaps give some examples (canned soup, frozen dinners, and so on).

Mentimeter

CONTROLLING IDEA TOPIC

Immigrants have contributed many delicious foods to U.S. cuisine.

The reader of this topic sentence expects to read about various ethnic foods popular in the United States: tacos, egg rolls, sushi, baklava, pizza, and so on.

A topic sentence should not have controlling ideas that are unrelated.

Mentimeter

Indie films are characterized by experimental techniques, low production costs, and provocative themes. (Identify the problem with this Topic sentence

Waiting for responses ...

Problems

- They require three separate paragraphs (and perhaps more) to explain fully.
- The three parts of the controlling idea are too unrelated for a single paragraph.

Mentimeter

Modify the following topic sentence: Indie films are characterized by experimental techniques, low production costs, and provocative themes.

Waiting for responses ...

Mentimeter

Answer: Independent films are characterized by experimental techniques.

Identify the topic and the controlling idea in each of the following sentences

Mentimeter

Driving on highways requires skill and alertness.

Waiting for responses ...

Mentimeter

The Caribbean island of Trinidad attracts tourists because of its calypsoe music.

Waiting for responses ...

Mentimeter

Spectacular beaches make Puerto Rico a tourist paradise.

Waiting for responses ...

Mentimeter

Many religious rules arose from the health needs of ancient times.

Waiting for responses ...

Mentimeter

In my opinion, television commercial for cosmetics lie to people.

Waiting for responses ...

Mentimeter

Taste and appearance are both important in Japanese cuisine.

Waiting for responses ...

Revision

- A topic sentence should be a complete sentence.
- A topic sentence should be neither too general nor too specific.
- If it is too general, the reader cannot tell exactly what the paragraph is going to discuss.
- If it is too specific, the writer will not have anything to write about in the rest of the paragraph.
- A topic sentence should not have unrelated controlling ideas.

Mentimeter

Write good topic sentences for the following paragraphs. Remember to include both a topic and a controlling idea.

Mentimeter

Paragraph 1

_____

_____.

English speakers relaxing at home, for example, may put on *kimonos*, which is a Japanese word. English speakers who live in a warm climate may take an afternoon *siesta* on an outdoor *patio* without realizing that these are Spanish words. In their gardens, they may enjoy the fragrance of *jasmine* flowers, a word that came into English from Persian. They may even relax on a *chaise* while snacking on *yogurt*, words of French and Turkish origin, respectively. At night, they may *shampoo* their hair and put on *pajamas*, words from the Hindi language of India.

Mentimeter

Paragraph 2

_____

_____.

In European universities, students are not required to attend classes. In fact, professors in Germany generally do not know the names of the students enrolled in their courses. In the United States, however, students are required to attend all classes and may be penalized if they do not. Furthermore, in the European system, students usually take just one comprehensive examination at the end of their entire four or five years of study. In the North American system, on the other hand, students usually have numerous quizzes, tests, and homework assignments, and they almost always have to take a final examination in each course at the end of each semester.

Write two or three topic sentences for each of the following topics. In other words, give two or three controlling ideas for the same topic.

- Movies
- Your home town
- Advertising

Supporting sentences

Supporting Sentences

- Supporting sentences explain or prove the topic sentence.
- Supporting sentences need to use specific details to be thorough and convincing.
- There are several kinds of specific supporting details: examples, statistics, and quotations.

Read Paragraphs A and B about red-light running

Mentimeter

Red-Light Running

Although some people think that red-light running is a minor traffic violation that is no worse than jaywalking,[1] it can, in fact, become a deadly crime. Red-light runners cause accidents all the time. Sometimes people are seriously injured and even killed. It is especially a problem in rush hour traffic. Everyone is in a hurry to get home, so drivers run red lights everywhere. The police do not do much about it because they are too busy. The only time they pay attention is when there is an accident, and then it is too late. In conclusion, running a red light is a serious offense.

Paragraph A

Mentimeter

Red-Light Running

[1]Although some people think red-light running is a minor traffic violation that is no worse than jaywalking, it can, in fact, become a deadly crime. [2]Red-light runners cause hundreds of accidents, including deaths and injuries as well as millions of dollars in damages. [3]Each year more than 900 people die, and nearly 200,000 are injured in crashes that involve red-light running. [4]Motorists run red lights all the time. [5]For example, in Fairfax, Virginia, a five-month-long survey at five busy intersections revealed that a motorist ran a red light every 20 minutes. [6]Red-light runners are seldom caught. [7]According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, "Communities don't have the resources to allow police to patrol intersections as often as would be needed to ticket all motorists who run red lights" ("Q&A").[2]

Paragraph B

Mentimeter

What are the specific supporting details added in paragraph 'B'?

Waiting for responses

Mentimeter

What words and phrases introduce the examples?

Waiting for responses ...

Supporting sentences

Academic writing normally requires that you support your ideas and opinions with facts, statistics, quotations, and similar kinds of information. You get these kinds of supporting details from outside sources such as books, magazines, newspapers, Websites, personal interviews, and so on.

Facts Vs Opinion

Use this paragraph to explain something in detail. Leverage agile frameworks to provide a robust synopsis for high level overviews. Iterative approaches to corporate strategy foster collaborative thinking to further the overall value proposition.

Men are better drivers than women.

Smoking is a bad habit.

English is an easy language to learn.

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At sea level, water boils at 100 degrees Celsius.

Women live longer than men.

Cigarettes are addictive.

Mentimeter

OPINION	Photographs of ultrathin fashion models send the wrong message to girls and young women.
FACT, BUT NEEDS PROOF	Fashion models are unnaturally thin.
SPECIFIC SUPPORTING DETAIL	The average model weighs 25 percent less than the average woman of the same height.

Mentimeter

Step 1 Decide which of the following statements is an opinion, a fact that needs proof, or a specific supporting detail. Write

- *O* for opinion
- *F-NP* for fact that needs proof
- *SSD* for specific supporting detail

Mentimeter

The first three have been done for you as examples.

F-NP 1. People who steal identities do a lot of damage before their victims become aware of it. *(The writer could give an example of a person who was victimized before noticing it.)*

O 2. Punishment for identity thieves is not severe enough. *(The writer could give an example of a typical punishment.)*

SSD 3. Last year, the losses of victims totaled more than $7 billion.

Mentimeter

_____ 4. Identity theft is more serious than any other type of theft.

_____ 5. Identity theft is increasing at a rapid pace.

_____ 6. In 2000, 31,000 cases of identity theft were reported to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC); in 2003, the number was 210,000.

Mentimeter

_____ 7. Most people do not report identity theft to the police.

_____ 8. In 2003, 60 percent of identity theft victims did not notify the police, according to the FTC.

_____ 9. Identity theft happens to ordinary people, not just to the wealthy.

Mentimeter

_____ 10. As grocery clerk Sue Jamison reported, "My wallet was stolen, and within a week, the thieves had ordered an expensive cell phone package, applied for a VISA credit card, and received a PIN from the Department of Motor Vehicles to change my driving record online."

_____ 11. It is easy for a thief to use the U.S. Postal Service to steal identities.

_____ 12. For example, thieves steal credit card statements from mailboxes, and then send a change-of-address card to the postal service to have future statements sent to a different address.

Mentimeter

_____ 13. Most victims of identity theft are young adults.

_____ 14. The Federal Trade Commission reports that there were more victims in the age group 18–29 than in any other group.

_____ 15. The police should do more to protect citizens from identity theft.

Using outside source

There are three ways to insert outside information into your own writing: (1) You can quote it, (2) you can summarize it, or (3) you can paraphrase it.

Mentimeter

Read the following model and notice how direct quotations are used to support the topic sentence. Notice that a quotation can be a complete sentence (or several sentences) or a short phrase. Also notice the punctuation of each quotation.

Mentimeter

Drugs and the Olympic Games 1

[1]It is no secret that performance-enhancing drugs have been used by Olympic athletes for decades. [2]According to an article in *Forbes* magazine, "From the brute steroids the East Germans reportedly used on their Olympians during the Cold War to today's man-made versions of natural human proteins, drugs have been as much a staple of the Games as gold, silver, and bronze" (Herper, par. 4).[1] [3]Despite rigorous drug testing, the use of banned performance-enhancing substances has become more widespread than ever. [4]The disqualification of athletes from the most recent Olympic Games because of illegal drug use shows that the problem is ongoing.

[5]It seems apparent that if athletes want to win, they must consider using drugs. [6]Dr. Michael Karsten, a Dutch physician who said he had prescribed anabolic steroids to hundreds of world-class athletes, states, "If you are especially gifted, you may win once, but from my experience you can't continue to win without drugs. [7]The field is just too filled with drug users" (qtd. in Bamberger and Yaeger 62).[2] [8]In fact, some people claim that record-breaking performances of Olympic athletes may be directly due to drugs. [9]Charles Yesalis, a Pennsylvania State University professor who has studied the use of drugs in sports, believes "a large percentage" of athletes who have set new records have done so with the help of performance-enhancing drugs. [10]"A lot of experts, at least in private, feel that way," he claims (qtd. in Herper, par. 6).

Mentimeter

Which sentence states the main idea of the first paragraph?

Waiting for responses

Mentimeter

What direct quotation supports it? What phrase introduces the quotation?

Waiting for responses ...

Mentimeter

Explain the in-text citation at the end of the second paragraph.

Waiting for responses ...

Mentimeter

To introduce borrowed information—direct quotations, indirect quotations, or statistics—use the phrase *according to* or a reporting verb such as the following:

assert	insist	report	suggest
claim	maintain	say	write
declare	mention	state	

The Concluding Sentence

- A paragraph does not always need a concluding sentence.
- A concluding sentence is not needed for every paragraph in a multiparagraph essay.
- For single paragraphs, especially long ones, a concluding sentence is helpful to the reader because it is a reminder of the important points.

Purposes of concluding sentence

- It signals the end of the paragraph.
- It leaves the reader with the most important ideas to remember. It can do this in two ways:
- By summmizing the main points of the paragraph or by repeating the topic sentence in different words

Mentimeter

End-of-Paragraph Signals Followed by a Comma

Finally,
In brief,
In conclusion,
Indeed,
In short,
Lastly,
Therefore,
Thus,
To sum up,

Mentimeter

Provide some examples

Waiting for responses

Mentimeter

End-of-Paragraph Signals Not Followed by a Comma

The evidence suggests that . . .
There can be no doubt that . . .
These examples show that . . .
We can see that . . .

Provide some examples

Waiting for responses

Mentimeter

Greeting Cards

Have you noticed how many different kinds of greeting cards you can buy these days? In the old days, the local drugstore had one rack displaying maybe five or six basic kinds of cards. You could walk into the store and choose an appropriate card in five minutes or less. Nowadays, however, the display space for greeting cards is as big as a soccer field, and it may take an hour or two to hunt down exactly the right card with exactly the right message. There are at least 30 categories of birthday cards alone: birthday cards for different ages, from different ages, for different relatives, from different relatives, for different genders, from different genders, from a couple, from the office, for dog owners, for cat owners, and so on. There are cards for getting a job, for retiring from a job, for acquiring a pet, for losing a pet, for becoming engaged, for breaking up. There are also greeting cards to send for no reason—"Thinking of you" or "Just because" cards. The newest type of card is the "encouragement card." An encouragement card offers comforting thoughts and helpful advice to someone who is sad or distressed in these troubled times. In short, there is now a greeting card for every possible life event and for a few nonevents as well.

Paragraph -1

Mentimeter

A Hawaiian Legend

Native people create legends to explain unusual phenomena in their environment. A legend from the Hawaiian island of Kauai explains how the naupaka flower, a flower that grows on beaches there, got its unusual shape. The flower looks like half a small daisy—there are petals on one side only. The legend says that the marriage of two young lovers on the island was opposed by both sets of parents. The parents found the couple together on a beach one day, and to prevent them from being together, one of the families moved to the mountains, separating the young couple forever. As a result, the naupaka flower separated into two halves; one half moved to the mountains, and the other half stayed near the beach. This story is a good example of a legend invented by native people to interpret the world around them.

Paragraph -2

Mentimeter

In which paragraph does the concluding sentence summarize the main points of the paragraph, which are not specifically stated in the topic sentence?

Waiting for responses ...

Mentimeter

In which paragraph does the concluding sentence paraphrase (repeat in different words) the topic sentence?

Waiting for responses ...

Mentimeter

List the conclusion language signals in each paragraph.

Waiting for responses ...

Mentimeter

Step 1 Underline the topic sentence in each paragraph.

Step 2 Add a good concluding sentence to each paragraph. You may either paraphrase the topic sentence or summarize the main points.

Step 3 Practice using end-of-paragraph signals by starting each concluding sentence with one.

Mentimeter

Paragraph 1

You can be a good conversationalist by being a good listener. When you are conversing with someone, pay close attention to the speaker's words while looking at his or her face. Show your interest by smiling and nodding. Furthermore, do not interrupt while someone is speaking; it is impolite to do so. If you have a good story, wait until the speaker is finished. Also, watch your body language; it can affect your communication whether you are the speaker or the listener. For instance, do not sit slumped in a chair or make nervous hand and foot movements. Be relaxed and bend your body slightly forward to show interest in the person and the conversation.

_____

_____

_____

Mentimeter

Paragraph 2

Modern communication technology is driving workers in the corporate world crazy. They feel buried under the large number of messages they receive daily. In addition to telephone calls, office workers receive dozens of e-mail and voice mail messages daily. In one company, in fact, managers receive an average of 100 messages a day. Because they do not have enough time to respond to these messages during office hours, it is common for them to do so in the evenings or on weekends at home.

_____

_____

_____

Mentimeter

1. A good topic sentence
   - is a complete sentence with a subject, a verb, and a controlling idea.
   - is neither too general nor too specific. It clearly states the main idea of the paragraph but does not include specific details.
   - is usually the first sentence in the paragraph.
2. Good supporting sentences
   - explain or prove the topic sentence.
   - are specific and factual.
   - can be examples, statistics, or quotations.
3. A good concluding sentence
   - signals the end of the paragraph.
   - summarizes the important points briefly or restates the topic sentence in different words.

Review