

## The paragraph

A **paragraph** is a group of sentences that relate to a topic or a theme. When your writing contains information about a variety of topics, it is convenient to divide your writing into separate paragraphs.

Traditionally, **the first word of a paragraph is indented**. (Sometimes new paragraphs, especially in books, are not indented. Instead, a separation is made by leaving a blank line space, as follows.)

In the writing model to the right, the first paragraph is about the U.S., and the second paragraph is about Tanzania. Dividing the writing into two paragraphs makes it easier to read and understand.

blank  
line space

### Clothing customs in different countries

Clothing customs in the United States are generally liberal, although in some places people dress more formally than in others. For example, in casual social settings, the dress code is almost "anything goes," and, in the summer, it's not unusual for people to go to nice restaurants in shorts and sandals. In offices and formal restaurants, though, people generally dress more conservatively in all seasons of the year.

Far away in East Africa, on the other hand, clothing customs are much more conservative, especially for women. Women should keep their shoulders covered, even in hot weather, and sleeveless shirts are always inappropriate. Skirts and pants should go to below the knees. In cities, and for business, a lightweight suit is appropriate for both men and women.

- A** Write a check mark in the place or places where a new paragraph could or should start. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, copy the paragraphs, indenting each one.

### Famous families

Jackie Chan is a movie star and singer from Hong Kong. His wife, Joan Lin, is an actress from Taiwan. They have a son, JC Chan. He's a singer and actor in the United States. Another famous family is the Williams family. Venus and Serena Williams are famous tennis players. Their mother's name is Oracene Price. Their father, Richard Williams, was their coach. Still another famous family is the Fernández family from Mexico. Vicente and Alejandro are father and son. They are both singers, and they are famous all over Latin America.

**B Guidance for the Writing Exercise (on page 108)** Use the Ideas and your answers to the questions below as a guide to help you write your two paragraphs.

### Ideas

A trip to visit friends or relatives  
A trip to and from work

A trip to and from school  
A vacation

### Paragraph 1

Begin your paragraph with an opening statement, such as: *Last month, I went to \_\_\_\_.*

- Where did you go?
- What kind of transportation did you take?
- Were there any transportation problems? If so, what were they?
- When did you leave?
- Who did you travel with?
- What did you do when you were there?
- When did you get back?

### Paragraph 2

Begin your next paragraph with an opening statement, such as: *On my next trip, ...*

- Where are you going to go?
- What kind of transportation are you going to take?
- Do you think you are going to have transportation problems on your next trip? Why or why not?
- When are you leaving?
- Who are you traveling with?
- What are you going to do when you are there?
- When are you getting back?