

OGUN DIGICLASS

CLASS: SECONDARY SCHOOL

SUBJECT: ENGLISH LANGUAGE

TOPIC: PARAGRAPH IN WRITING



PARAGRAPH IN WRITING

Learning Objectives

- (a) Define paragraph
- (b) Explain the importance of a paragraph
- (c) Highlight the qualities of a good paragraph
- (d) Identify the topic sentence in a paragraph
- (e) Write a good paragraph

DEFINITIONS OF A PARAGRAPH

A paragraph is a group of sentences that deals with one main topic or idea.

A paragraph is a number of related sentences expressing one unit of thought or one central idea.

A paragraph is simply a section of a piece of writing usually consisting of several sentences amidst others of its kind.

A paragraph is a group of sentences that are connected by a single main idea or topic.

IMPORTANCE OF A PARAGRAPH

- *Well-structured paragraphs help to keep the reader's interest.

- *Effective and well-crafted paragraphing can seamlessly transition from one idea to the next idea in the paragraph to follow.

- *Good paragraphs help the writer express topics in structure, easy to grasp sections.

QUALITIES OF A GOOD PARAGRAPH

- (1) The paragraph must start with a sentence. As a grammatical rule, every sentence must begin with a capital letter. For example: Leadership is a major problem in Nigeria.
- (2) The paragraph must contain a topic sentence.
- (3) A paragraph should center on a single idea or concept.
- (4) The paragraph should be properly linked (Coherence).
- (5) Unity

FEATURES OF A PARAGRAPH

Unified (All sentences related to the main idea).

Related (to the central thesis of the written work).

Coherent (logical structure, following a plan for development).

Well-developed (topic and supporting sentences are explained with examples in detailed).

A paragraph is sometimes one sentence long but it is usually between two and six sentences in length.

1 Section 1

This is the first paragraph. There is no indent in the first paragraph. This is the first paragraph. There is no indent in the first paragraph. This is the first paragraph. There is no indent in the first paragraph.

This is the second paragraph. There is indent in the second paragraph. This is the second paragraph. There is indent in the second paragraph. This is the second paragraph. There is indent in the second paragraph.

WHEN TO START A NEW PARAGRAPH?

- *You start a new paragraph by writing a little way from the margin (indenting).
- *You start a new paragraph when there is a change in place.
- *You start a new paragraph when there is a change in person (either character or talking).

*You start a new paragraph when there is a change in viewpoint/topic.

*You start a new paragraph when you want to write the introduction and conclusion.

TOPIC SENTENCE

The topic sentence is usually the first or second sentence in a paragraph.

It introduces the new idea. It presents the topic and explains what the writer will say about the topic.

This is also called controlling idea.

SUPPORTING SENTENCE

The supporting sentence adds information about the topic and controlling idea.

Supporting sentences can include definitions, explanations and examples.

COMMON MISTAKES

No topic sentence: This makes it difficult to connect the sentences in the paragraph to any central idea or topic.

More than one topic: This can cause confusion or make your main idea compete with another in the same paragraph. Supporting sentences are absent.

***Paragraphs too long:** If a paragraph is too long, you run the risk of losing the reader's interest or making mistakes.

***Paragraphs too short:** Although, paragraphs can be one sentence long, they are usually at least two sentences to give a main idea and supporting details.

Practical Exercise 1

I wanted to be a lawyer, but I ended up being a teacher. I knew rich lawyers but I knew no rich teachers. I knew famous lawyers ,but I knew no famous teachers. The likes of Gani Fawehinmi, Femi Falana, Festus Keyamo et.cetera really thrilled me in those days of self discovery. I was mesmerized by their fame and hypnotized by their names. The zeal was further oiled by the neatness of my father's office to the high court at Ikorodu and the nature of his work.

(Extracted from Kay Yusuf Sanni's BEING A TEACHER PAYS).

*The topic sentence in this paragraph is *'I want to be a lawyer,but I ended up being a teacher'*.

PRACTICAL EXERCISE 2

Your sister wants to marry a man from another ethnic group against your mother's wishes. Write a letter to your mother giving at least three reasons why she should accept your sister's decision.

SOLUTION:

The first paragraph should be dedicated to asking your mother's well being and the generally well being of the family. Pleasantries!

*The second paragraph should be a bit of introduction of how you got the news and why you have written the letter.

*There is mutual love and respect between them.

*Abortion is forbidden in our family.

*My sister marrying from that ethics group will breed stability and progress.

PRACTICAL EXERCISE 3

Write an article suitable for publication in a national newspaper on the growing incidence of drug abuse among the youth, stating the causes and suggesting ways it can be curbed.

ANSWERS TO EXERCISE

3

Paragraph 1 shall explore the definitions of drug and drug abuse.

Paragraph 2 shall highlight the various causes of drug abuse such as lack of parental care and supervision, the growing incidence of unemployment, peer group influence ,environmental factor, government factor.

Paragraph 3:There is lack of parental care and supervision.

Paragraph 4:The rise in unemployment.

TAKE HOME:

**THE BEST WAY TO IMPROVE YOUR OWN
WRITTEN PARAGRAPH IS TO READ, READ,
AND READ!**

ASSIGNMENT

- 1 Define a paragraph
- 2 Highlight the features of a good paragraph
- 3 As the chief speaker in a debate competition, write a speech for or against the topic: *Leadership is a major problem in Nigeria.*
- 4 Using 2019 WASSCE summary passage question, write out the topic sentence in the given passage.