

Topic: Aspects of Writing Paragraph

Basic Concepts

- ❖ A paragraph is a group of sentences.
- ❖ It must have unity, Order, Coherence and Completeness.
- ❖ It must deal with only a single idea.
- ❖ It must have a beginning, a middle and an ending of this idea.
- ❖ The first line of it should be indented

Structure of a Paragraph

A Paragraph must have three basic organs

- a) **Topic Sentence** which introduces the **main idea** of the paragraph.
- b) **Developer/ Developing Sentences** which helps to develop the topic sentence through supporting sentences.
- c) **Concluding Sentence** which summarizes the whole idea in a comment or rephrases the topic sentence.

It is most important to note that the paragraph you are going to write should express your ideas **logically and consistently**. And in order to ensure the paragraph is logical and consistent in expressing the topic sentence, you should be aware of the following concepts:

1. **Unity.** Unity in a paragraph begins with the topic sentence. Every paragraph has one single, controlling idea that is expressed in its topic sentence, which is typically the first sentence of the paragraph. A paragraph is unified around this main idea, with the supporting sentences with sufficient discussion and examples. In order to write a good topic sentence, think about your theme and all the points you want to make. Decide which point drives the rest, and then write it as your topic sentence.
2. **Order.** Order refers to the way you organize your supporting sentences. Whether you choose chronological order, order of importance, or another logical presentation of detail, a solid paragraph always has a definite organization. In a well-ordered paragraph, the reader follows along easily, aided by the pattern you've established. Order helps the reader grasp your meaning and avoid confusion.
3. **Coherence.** Coherence is the quality that makes your writing understandable. Sentences within a paragraph need to connect to each other and work together as a whole. One of the best ways to achieve coherency is to use **transition words**. These words create bridges from one sentence to the next.

You can use transition words that show order (first, second, third); spatial relationships (above, below) or logic (furthermore, in addition, in fact). Also, in writing a paragraph, using a consistent verb tense and point of view are important ingredients for coherency.

4. **Completeness.** Completeness means a paragraph is well-developed. If all sentences clearly and sufficiently support the main idea, then your paragraph is complete. If there are not enough sentences or enough information to prove your topic sentence, then the paragraph is incomplete.

Function of the topic sentence

- a) The topic sentence highlights the main idea of the paragraph.
- b) It must have a **controlling idea** upon which the rest of the paragraph is unified and developed.
- c) In most cases the topic sentence appears at the beginning of the paragraph.
- d) The plan of the topic sentence must be observed.

Activity

Here are some topic sentences. Identify the controlling idea in each of them

- a) There are many interesting sights in Chittagong to attract the tourists.
- b) Taking this medicine has a number of side effects.
- c) The cow is a useful domestic animal.
- d) Traveling abroad is very educative.

Function of the developing sentences

- ❖ They form the middle of the paragraph.
- ❖ They are controlled by the main idea mentioned in the topic sentence.
- ❖ They are logically linked together with the help of appropriate linkers.

You should know about **transition words** (punctuation, linking words) in order to develop the topic sentence logically and consistently. The following list of transition words may help you to write a paragraph comfortably and confidently.

Type of Transition	Examples
Time	after, before, finally, first, last, meanwhile, next, now, once, second, then, when, while, as soon as, at the same time, whenever
Place	above, below, beside, inside, outside, there, next to
Order of importance	better, best, least, more importantly, most importantly, most of all
Addition	and, also, as well, furthermore, in addition, moreover
Cause and effect	as a result, because, since, so, therefore, thus
Compare and contrast	like, different from, in contrast, nevertheless, on the one hand, on the other hand, same as, similarly, unlike

Activity

Develop the following topic sentences into paragraph using suitable developers.

- i) Mr. Karim is a successful teacher.
- ii) Living on the university campus has three major advantages.
- iii) There are several reasons behind the poor performance of the students in English.

Function of the concluding sentence

- ❖ The concluding sentence is the last sentence of the paragraph.
- ❖ It brings the paragraph to a logical conclusion.
- ❖ It either paraphrases the topic sentence or summarizes the main idea.

Here are some ending signals in such phrases and expressions as follows. You may use them

In conclusion, so, it may be said, therefore, in short, to sum up, in this way, in my opinion, in fact, and not to mention anything else

To understand the basic characteristics of the paragraph, look at following groups of sentences:

<p><i>Mr. Rahman is a <u>renowned professor</u>. Last year he was seriously ill. He has a nice garden in front his house. His son has married a beautiful girl. Her father is a great scholar. Mrs. Rahman is a very pious woman. She lost her parents a few years ago.</i></p>	<p><i>Mr. Habib is a happy person now for <u>several reasons</u>. Firstly, this year he has made a lot of money from his business. Secondly, he has completed the construction of his new house at Banani. Thirdly, his wife has now recovered from her long illness. Fourthly, he has given all daughters in marriage. And then, his son also has got his expected job. Not to mention anything else, these are the causes of his present happiness.</i></p>
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A careful reading of the groups of sentences above will certainly show that the sentences in first group are all unrelated and so they fail to express any single point or idea. Here several ideas have just been put together without binding them up logically. As a result, it has not become a consistent (conforming to a regular pattern) piece of composition. In other words, this group of sentences does not make what we mean by a paragraph.

On the other hand, all the seven sentences in the second group have been arranged logically and consistently. They are all bound together to deal with a single idea– namely Mr. Habib’s happiness.

Now let us see how the second group of sentences forms an ideal paragraph:

Here the controlling idea is *Mr. Habib’s happiness*. None of the sentences express any different idea. As a complete piece of composition, this group of sentences

has a beginning, a middle and an ending. The first sentence of this group marks the beginning by introducing the controlling idea of Mr. Habib's happiness. The following five sentences then support that idea and thus constitute the body of the paragraph. Finally, the seventh and last sentence of the group concludes the same idea and obviously marks the ending of the paragraph. From this analysis, it becomes clear that the second group of sentences above is a unified piece of writing a paragraph.