

Lecture One: Paragraph Writing

**1. Definition:**

In English, a paragraph is a number of sentences grouped together and relating to one topic. Or, a group of related sentences that develop a single idea.

**2. Characteristics of a good paragraph:**

**a. Indentation:**

The form of a paragraph is easy to recognize; the first sentence is indented a few spaces i.e. the first word of a paragraph is not written at the beginning of the line.

The *indentation* tells the reader that there is a new paragraph starting and that a separate unit of thought will be presented.

**b. Topic Sentence:**

It is known that a paragraph is a group of related sentences that develop one main idea. In a paragraph, three elements should be followed: *the topic sentence, the supporting sentences, and the concluding sentence*. These three essential elements are the basis of a paragraph.

- The *topic sentence* expresses the paragraph's central purpose. It expresses the main point of the paragraph or its controlling idea.
- The *topic sentence* often comes at the beginning of the paragraph, but it may appear at the end or in the middle. Sometimes, it does not appear at all but is understood.
- The *topic sentence* should be clear and not too general, that is to say if the topic sentence is expressed in terms that are too general, it will be difficult to limit your idea. But stating the controlling idea, your purpose of writing is clear, and your idea is limited and not general.

**c. Unity:**

The paragraph discusses *only one topic* or one aspect of a topic. This characteristic is known as *Unity*. A paragraph is said to have unity when it deals with only *one central idea* and when every sentence contributes to this idea. All the facts, examples, reason used to develop an idea – i.e. the supporting sentences - must be relevant to it.

**d. -Coherence:**

A paragraph is said to have coherence when the relationship between sentences is clear, when the transition from one sentence to the next is easy, natural, and logical.

Coherence in a paragraph is achieved by:

- Repeating key nouns and using pronouns those refer back to key nouns.
- Using transition signals for showing the relation of one idea to the next one.
- Arranging your sentences in a logical order

***e. -Cohesion:***

It means that the process of linking and connecting sentences together using transitional expressions, linking words, repetition, pronouns in order to make the paragraph cohesive and show the reader that the ideas are related to each other.

**3. The Paragraph Outline:**

An outline is a plan. To draw an outline is to draw all the points which are expressed in the paragraph. The usefulness of an outline, before you write a paragraph, is to make sure that you will achieve a *unified* paragraph.