

Paragraph Writing

I/ Definition

A paragraph is a sentence or group of sentences that support one main idea. It is a series of sentences that are organized and coherent, and are all related to a single topic.

In academic writing, a paragraph is often between five and ten sentences long but it can be longer or shorter, depending on the topic.

Paragraphs can contain many different kinds of information. A paragraph could contain a series of brief examples or a single long illustration of a general point. It might describe a place, character, or process; narrate a series of events; compare or contrast two or more things; classify items into categories; or describe causes and effects. Regardless of the kind of information they contain, all paragraphs share certain characteristics. One of the most important of these is a topic sentence.

A paragraph has three basic parts: the topic sentence, the supporting sentences, and the concluding sentence.

- 1. The topic sentence:** it is the main idea of the paragraph. It is usually the first sentence of the paragraph, and it is the most general sentence of the paragraph.
- 2. The supporting sentences:** these are the sentences that talk about or explain the topic sentence. They are more detailed ideas that follow the topic sentence.
- 3. The concluding sentence:** this may be found as the last sentence of the paragraph. It can finish a paragraph by repeating the main idea or just giving a final comment about the topic.

II/ Qualities of a Good Paragraph

- 1. UNITY:** A good paragraph possesses unity when all the sentences develop the main idea. Unity in the paragraph is achieved by the use of a topic sentence with its controlling idea, supporting details, and concluding sentence.

- 2. COHERENCE:** all the sentences and ideas in the paragraph flow smoothly together to make clear and logical points about the topic. Coherence can be achieved through the use of:
 - a.** Natural or easily recognized order.
 - b.** Transition words and phrases - used to show the connection from one sentence to another, or to signal a new train of thoughts.
 - c.** Repetition of Key Words - important words or phrases (and their synonyms) may be repeated throughout a paragraph to connect the thoughts into a coherent statement.

- 3. 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.

- 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 thesis, then the paragraph is incomplete. Usually three supporting sentences, in addition to a topic sentence and concluding sentence, are needed for a paragraph to be complete. The concluding sentence or last sentence of the paragraph should summarize your main idea by reinforcing your topic sentence.