

Blueprints for the Paragraph

Objectives

Analysis:

Transitions:

Practice:

In Part A, you will:

identify and analyze the three basic parts of a paragraph

learn to use *in addition (to)*, *though* and *although*, and *later*

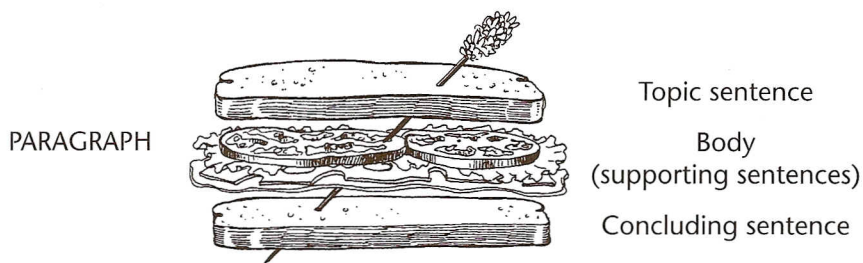
paraphrase, summarize, and synthesize information

What Is a Paragraph?

A **paragraph** is a group of sentences that discusses one idea. Some paragraphs consist of two or three long sentences, but it is more common to have paragraphs of four to ten sentences of varied lengths. It is easy to recognize a paragraph because the first line is usually indented, or moved in, about five spaces or half an inch. Look at the first line of this paragraph, and you will see that it is indented. The space is called an **indentation**. If you count the number of indentations on a page, you will know the number of paragraphs on that page.

The Three Main Parts of a Paragraph

The basic organization of a paragraph is very simple. It has three main parts: the **topic sentence**, the **body** (which consists of supporting sentences), and the **concluding sentence**.



Topic Sentence

The topic sentence is a plan or guide for the reader. It tells the **topic** of your paragraph. Here is an example of a topic sentence:

Computer knowledge has improved the lives of many students.

The general topic of the paragraph is *computer knowledge*. A good topic sentence lets the reader know what your paragraph is about and sometimes how it is organized as well. Most of the time—but not always—the topic sentence is the first sentence of the paragraph.

In addition to a main topic, a topic sentence has a **controlling idea**. You use the controlling idea to develop the main topic in a particular direction. To find the controlling idea for the topic sentence above, ask a question about the topic: *What is important about computer knowledge?* The answer is that *it improves the lives of students*, and this is the controlling idea for the paragraph.

Consider these topic sentences, topics, and controlling ideas. Notice that the topic is the same in each topic sentence, but the controlling idea is different.

Topic sentence	Topic	Controlling idea
1. The quality of Hollywood movies has decreased in the last fifty years.	Hollywood movies	decreased quality
2. Hollywood movies are getting more expensive to produce for a number of reasons.	Hollywood movies	reasons for higher production costs
3. Hollywood movies are generally classified as comedies, action films, and romances.	Hollywood movies	three types: comedies, action films, and romances

Body

The main part of the paragraph is called the **body**. The sentences in the body *support* and add to the information in your topic sentence. Typically, there are four to eight supporting sentences in the body. All of these sentences must be about the same topic.

Here are two supporting sentences for the topic sentence about computers:

One way in which they make students' lives easier is by use of the Internet. Students can now find all sorts of information to aid in their research without leaving their homes.

Concluding Sentence

In the last sentence of your paragraph, you can sum up the contents and express your feelings. This sentence is called the **concluding sentence**. When you write only one paragraph about a topic, for example, you should always end with a concluding sentence.

Here is the concluding sentence for the paragraph about computers:

Students should be grateful that this new technology has made their studies so much easier.

The writer includes the main topic and gives an opinion about this new technology.

If you are writing a few or several paragraphs about one topic, the purpose of the concluding sentence in each paragraph can be a little different. Sometimes the concluding sentence introduces the idea of the next paragraph. In other words, it acts as a transition sentence between ideas.

EXERCISE

1

IDENTIFYING THE THREE PARTS OF A PARAGRAPH (A)

Read the paragraph and answer the questions.



Selling a product successfully in another country often requires changes in the original product. Domino's Pizza offers mayonnaise and potato pizza in Tokyo and pickled ginger pizza in India. Heinz varies its ketchup recipe to satisfy the needs of specific markets. In Belgium and Holland, for example, the ketchup is not as sweet as it is in the United States. When Haagen-Dazs served up one of its most popular American flavors, Chocolate **Chip** Cookie **Dough**, to British customers, they left it sitting in supermarket freezers. What the **premium** ice cream maker learned is that chocolate chip cookies are not popular in Great Britain and

(continued)

chip: a small piece

dough: a mixture of flour and liquids, butter, or oil

premium: top quality

snatch: take, grab

raw: uncooked

come up with:
find, produce

dairy: milk products

wise: intelligent

fundamental:
basic

(continued)

that children do not have a history of **snatching raw** dough from the bowl, so the company had to develop flavors that would sell in Great Britain. After holding a contest to **come up with** a flavor the British would like, the company launched "Cool Britannia," vanilla ice cream with strawberries and chocolate-covered Scottish shortbread. Because **dairy** products are not part of Chinese diets, Frito-Lay took the cheese out of Chee-tos in China. Instead, the company sells Seafood Chee-tos. Without a doubt, these products were so successful in these foreign lands only because the company realized that it was **wise** to do market research and make **fundamental** changes in the products.

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1. Write the topic sentence here. Circle the topic, and underline the controlling idea.

2. The body of this paragraph consists of many examples of how companies have modified their products in foreign markets. Underline the example that was the most unusual or surprising to you and explain why here.

3. Circle the concluding sentence. Which important ideas and terms are the same in both the topic sentence and the concluding sentence? Write some of them here.

EXERCISE

2

IDENTIFYING THE THREE PARTS OF A PARAGRAPH (B)

Read the paragraph and answer the questions.

I believe that capital punishment is wrong. First of all, there is the question of proving someone's guilt or innocence with 100 percent accuracy. What if a person who is judged as guilty is really innocent? We now know of many cases in the United States in which an innocent

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permanent: forever

deter: prevent,
avoid

(continued)

person was put to death. Because the result of capital punishment is **permanent**, it is important to be absolutely certain of a person's guilt. However, in some cases, this is simply not possible, so from time to time capital punishment will result in killing an innocent person. Second, capital punishment is killing. I do not believe in killing for any reason. Killing someone who may have killed someone else is not a solution. Finally, one reason given for capital punishment is that it is a deterrent. That is, some people believe that the fear of capital punishment will stop others from committing a murder. However, this is simply not true. If it were true, then we would have very few cases of capital punishment. History shows us that this has not been the case and that capital punishment has not been a **deterrent** to murder. For these and many other reasons, I cannot support capital punishment in any form.

1. Write the topic sentence here. Circle the topic and underline the controlling idea.

2. The body of this paragraph consists of many reasons that capital punishment is wrong. Underline the example that was the most convincing to you. Then explain why here.

3. Circle the concluding sentence. Which important ideas and terms are the same in both the topic sentence and the concluding sentence? Write some of them here.

EXERCISE

3

IDENTIFYING THE THREE PARTS OF A PARAGRAPH (C)

Read the paragraph and answer the questions.

The most fundamental classification of the chemical elements is into two groups: metals and nonmetals. Metals typically have certain physical properties. For example, they have a shiny appearance. In addition, they have the ability to change shape without breaking, and they are excellent

(continued)

conductor: carrier

yield: produce,
result in

(continued)

conductors of heat and electricity. Nonmetals, on the other hand, do not usually have these same physical properties. These three differences are important ones, but there are chemical differences between metals and nonmetals as well. When there is any doubt whether a chemical element is a metal or a nonmetal, a chemical analysis will **yield** the final answer. In sum, a careful consideration of the three physical properties and a chemical analysis are necessary to separate chemical elements into metals and nonmetals.

From *Introductory Chemistry* by Steven Zumdhal.

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1. Write the topic sentence here. Circle the topic, and underline the controlling idea.

2. The body of this paragraph consists of four ways in which metals and nonmetals differ. List these four differences here.

3. Circle the concluding sentence. Which important ideas and terms are the same in both the topic sentence and the concluding sentence? Write some of them here.
