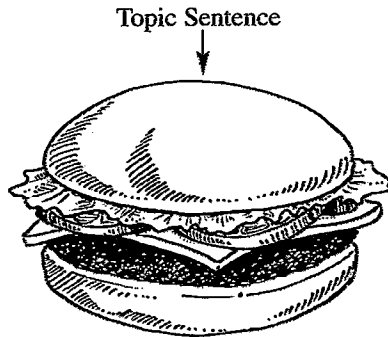


The Three Parts of a Paragraph

In Chapter 1, you learned that a paragraph has three parts: a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence. Now we will study each part of a paragraph in more detail.

The Topic Sentence



The most important sentence in a paragraph is the **topic sentence**. It is called the topic sentence because it tells the reader what the topic of the paragraph is. In other words, it tells the reader what he or she is going to read about. The topic sentence is usually the first sentence in a paragraph. It is the top piece of bread in our paragraph “cheeseburger sandwich.”

The Two Parts of a Topic Sentence

A topic sentence has two parts: a **topic** and a **controlling idea**. The topic part names the topic. The controlling idea part tells what the paragraph will say about the topic. It tells the reader: This paragraph will discuss these things—and only these things—about this topic.

For example, the topic of the model paragraph on page 37 is *flight attendants*. What will the paragraph say about flight attendants? The controlling idea tells us: *They have three characteristics*. The paragraph will not tell us about their uniforms, their training, or their duties. It will only discuss three characteristics that flight attendants have.

Here are examples of other topic sentences. The topic in all three examples is the same: *English*. The controlling idea in each says something different about English. From the controlling ideas, can you imagine what the rest of the paragraph will say about English?

English is constantly adding new words.

English borrows words from other languages.

English is necessary for many different jobs.

[Level 2]
First Steps in
Academic Writing

(2nd Ed.)

Ann Hogue

Pearson
Longman

Paragraph 2

Beaches

Beaches are fun in summer and in winter. In summer, you can swim and do many other water sports. If you don't like water sports, you can play beach games or relax on the warm sand. In winter, beaches are less crowded, so they are good places for solitary walks. Also, on a clear winter night, nothing is more fun than sitting with a group of friends around a big bonfire, talking, laughing, and singing. Indeed, a beach is a place to have fun all year.

Paragraph 3

Beaches

Beaches differ in various parts of the world. Thailand has miles of empty beaches. They are beautiful, clean, and uncrowded, even in summer. You can spend the whole afternoon on a beach and not see another person. In Japan, on the other hand, the beaches are very crowded. You can hardly find a place to sit down at the more popular Japanese beaches. The beaches in Northern Europe differ in another way. The water is cold, so most people go to the beach only to sunbathe. Along the French Riviera, the beaches are rocky, not sandy as they are on tropical islands. Each type of beach—empty or crowded, sandy or rocky—has its own special characteristics to enjoy.

Paragraph 4

Beaches

People of all ages have fun at beaches. First, young children love going to a beach. Children love to splash in the water, jump in the waves, and play in the sand. They happily dig holes, fill buckets, and build sand castles all day long. A second group of people who have fun at a beach are teenagers. Teenagers enjoy active water sports, such as surfing, jet skiing, and boardsailing. They also like to just “hang out”¹ at the beach with their friends. Third, senior citizens² have a good time at the beach, too. They take long walks along the water's edge or simply relax and enjoy the sunshine. In brief, children, teenagers, and grandparents can all have fun at a beach.

¹hang out: relax and socialize (slang)

²senior citizens: people older than about sixty-five

PRACTICE 2
Topic Sentences

- A. Circle the topic and underline the controlling idea in each of the following topic sentences. There is one topic sentence in which the topic comes *after* the controlling idea.

1. Good roommates have four characteristics.
2. College students take many kinds of tests.
3. Small cars have several advantages.
4. Big cars are safer than small cars for two reasons.
5. A baseball player must master several skills.
6. Living with your parents has certain advantages.
7. Living with your parents has certain disadvantages.
8. Talent and dedication are two characteristics of Olympic athletes.
9. The Middle East is the birthplace of three major religions.
10. Tokyo has excellent public transportation systems.
11. Tokyo is one of the world's most expensive cities.

- B. Read each paragraph. Then choose the best topic sentence and write it on the line provided.

1. _____
 _____ . First, living in a foreign country helps you learn another language faster than studying it at school. Second, you can learn directly about the history, geography, and culture of a country. Third, you become a more tolerant³ person because you experience different ways of living. Fourth, living in a foreign country makes you appreciate your own country better.
 - a. Living in a foreign country helps you learn.
 - b. Everyone should live in a foreign country for a while.
 - c. Living in a foreign country has four benefits.

2. _____
 _____ . Some colleges and universities in the United States are private. Private colleges and universities do not get money from taxes, so they are usually more expensive. Other colleges and universities are public; that is, the citizens of each state pay some of the costs through their taxes. As a result, public colleges are cheaper for students to attend. No matter which type of college you attend—public or private, you can get a good education.
 - a. There are two main types of colleges and universities in the United States.
 - b. Public colleges and universities get money from taxes.
 - c. There are many colleges and universities in the United States.

(continued on next page)

³ tolerant: accepting of differences

3. _____
_____. One reason for choosing a small college is that classes are small. The average class in a small college is twenty students. Another reason is that it is easy to meet with professors. Professors in small colleges have time to help students and are usually happy to do so. In addition, small colleges are friendly, so new students make friends quickly. For these three reasons, small colleges are better than large universities for many students.
- Small colleges are friendlier than large universities.
 - There are several reasons for attending a small college instead of a large university.
 - You can get an excellent education at a small college.

4. _____
_____. First of all, employers want workers to be dependable. That is, they want workers who come to work every day. Second, employers want workers who are responsible. Can the boss give the worker a project to do and know that it will be done well? Third, employers look for workers who can work well with others. The ability to get along with co-workers is important to the success of a business. To summarize, employers look for dependable, responsible team players.
- It is difficult to find good employees these days.
 - Employers read job applications very carefully.
 - Employers look for three main qualities in their employees.

C. Write a topic sentence for each of the following paragraphs.

1. _____
_____. Green curry is the hottest Thai curry. People who like very spicy food will enjoy green curry. Red curry is medium hot. It is flavorful, but it doesn't burn your mouth. Yellow curry is the mildest of all. It is usually the choice of people who eat Thai food for the first time. In short, you have three delicious choices when you order Thai curry.

2. _____
_____. First, good teachers know their subject very well. That is, a math teacher has advanced education in mathematics, and an English teacher is an expert in English grammar. Second, good teachers must be good communicators. Being a good communicator means presenting information in ways that students can understand. Third, good teachers are enthusiastic. That is, they are so interested in their subject that they make it fun to learn. To summarize, good teachers have expert knowledge, good communication skills, and contagious¹ enthusiasm.

¹ contagious: can be transmitted from one person to another person

3. _____

_____ . The first type of shopper doesn't like to waste time. She knows what she wants to buy and how much she wants to pay. If the store has what she wants, she buys it and leaves. She is a good kind of customer because she doesn't take too much of a salesperson's time. A second type of shopper comes into a store with a general idea of what she wants, listens to the salesperson's suggestions, tries on a few items, and makes a decision. She is also a good kind of customer. A third kind of shopper has no idea what she wants. She spends two hours trying on one outfit² after another. She takes up a lot of a salesperson's time and sometimes doesn't buy anything. In conclusion, the first two types of shoppers are a salesperson's dream, but the third type is a salesperson's nightmare.

D. Add two different controlling ideas to these topics to make complete topic sentences.

1. Sports

_____ Different sports are played at different times of the year.

_____ Each country has its own favorite sport.

2. International students

3. Hollywood movies

4. Automobile drivers

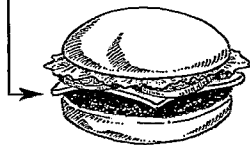
5. Restaurants

6. (Your town, city, or country)

² outfit: set of clothes worn together

Supporting Sentences

Supporting Sentences



The middle sentences of a paragraph are the **supporting sentences**. Supporting sentences explain or prove the idea in the topic sentence. They are the “filling” in a paragraph “sandwich.” The supporting sentences are the biggest part of a paragraph, just as the filling is the biggest part of a sandwich.

PRACTICE 3

Supporting Sentences

Work with a partner or in a small group. Discuss possible supporting points for these topic sentences from Practice 2A on page 41. Write your points in the spaces below each sentence. You do not have to write complete sentences.

1. (Good roommates) have four characteristics.

a. are neat, tidy

b. are cheerful

c. share housework

d. pay their share of the rent on time

2. College students take many kinds of tests.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

3. Small cars have several advantages.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

4. Big cars are safer than small cars for two reasons.

a. _____

b. _____

5. A baseball player must master several skills.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

6. Living with your parents has certain advantages.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

7. Living with your parents has certain disadvantages.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

Listing-Order Transition Signals

A **transition signal** is a word or phrase that shows how one idea is related to another idea. In a listing-order paragraph, use transition signals such as *First*, *Second*, and *Third* to tell your reader that these are main points.

Here are some transition signals that show listing order.

Listing-Order Signals	
1. First, First of all, Second, Third, In addition, Also, Finally,	2. also , also.

1. Place most listing-order transition signals at the beginning of the sentence, and put a comma after them.

First, living in a foreign country helps you learn another language faster than studying it at school.

In addition, small colleges are friendlier, so new students make friends more quickly.

Also, on a clear winter night, nothing is more fun than sitting with a group of friends around a big bonfire, talking, laughing, and singing.

2. *Also* may come in the middle of a sentence (between the subject and the verb) without a comma or at the end of a sentence with a comma.

They **also** like to “hang out” at the beach with their friends.

They like to “hang out” at the beach with their friends, **also**.

PRACTICE 4**Listing-Order
Transition
Signals**

A. Identify listing-order signals.

Step 1 Circle the listing-order transition signals in the model paragraph about flight attendants on page 37.

Step 2 Copy the transition signals for the three main points of the model paragraph:

Transition signal for the first main point: _____

Transition signal for the second main point: _____

Transition signal for the third main point: _____

Step 3 What other listing-order transition signal can you find in the model paragraph? Write it here: _____

B. Read the paragraph about human intelligence that follows. Add listing-order signals in the blank spaces, and add commas where they are necessary.

Kinds of Intelligence¹

There are many kinds of intelligence. (1) _____ there is mathematical-logical intelligence. People with this kind of intelligence become mathematicians, scientists, or engineers. (2) _____ there is linguistic² intelligence. People with linguistic intelligence are good at language, so they become poets and writers. We are familiar with these first two kinds of intelligence, but other kinds are not so familiar. There are (3) _____ spatial and musical kinds of intelligence. Spatial intelligence is necessary for architects and artists, and musical intelligence is necessary for musicians. (4) _____ there is kinesthetic³ intelligence. Athletes and dancers have kinesthetic intelligence. Personal intelligence is a kind of intelligence (5) _____. People with personal intelligence manage people well, so they become leaders of society. In short, there is more than one way to be smart.

Paragraph Unity

Here is an important rule to remember when you write supporting sentences.

A paragraph must follow the rule of **unity**. All the sentences in a paragraph are about one main idea.

Another way of expressing the rule of unity is to say that all the supporting sentences in a paragraph must be **relevant**. Relevant means “directly related to the main idea.” For example, if your paragraph is about your mother’s good

¹This paragraph is based on the work of Howard Gardner, a professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

²linguistic: related to language

³kinesthetic: related to movement of the human body

cooking, a sentence such as *My sister is also a good cook* is not relevant because the paragraph is about your mother, not your sister. When you write a paragraph, make sure that all of your supporting sentences are relevant. The opposite of *relevant* is *irrelevant*.

PRACTICE 5

Paragraph Unity

Step 1 Read the following paragraphs and locate the topic sentence in each. Circle the topic and underline the controlling idea.

Step 2 In each paragraph, two sentences break the rule of unity. Find these irrelevant sentences, and cross them out.

Paragraph 1

California

¹California is a state with every type of geography. ²It has mountains where you can enjoy the winter sports of skiing, snowboarding, and snowshoeing. ³It has deserts where temperatures can reach 110°F (43°C) in the summer. ⁴It has beaches where you can surf, swim, and fish. ⁵It has forests where the world's tallest trees grow. ⁶Finally, it has farmland where a lot of the nation's fruits and vegetables grow. ⁷California also has Hollywood and Disneyland, which are world-famous centers of entertainment. ⁸California is a popular place to live, so many people move there every year. ⁹Indeed, California has it all: mountains, deserts, beaches, and farms.

Paragraph 2

Nurses

¹A nurse should have at least five characteristics. ²First, he or she must be a caring person. ³He or she must have genuine concern about sick, injured, frightened people. ⁴Second, a nurse must be organized. ⁵If a nurse forgets to give a patient his or her medicine on time, the consequences could be serious. ⁶Third, a nurse must be calm. ⁷He or she may have to make a life-and-death decision in an emergency, and a calm person makes better decisions than an excitable one. ⁸Doctors need to stay calm in emergencies, too. ⁹In addition, a nurse should be physically strong because nursing requires a lot of hard physical work. ¹⁰Finally, a nurse must be intelligent enough to learn subjects ranging from chemistry to psychology and to operate the complex machinery used in hospitals today. ¹¹There is a shortage of nurses today, so they earn good salaries. ¹²In brief, nursing is a profession for people who are caring, organized, calm, strong, and smart.

The Concluding Sentence



↑
Concluding Sentence

Paragraphs that stand alone (that is, paragraphs that are not part of a longer composition) often have a **concluding sentence** at the end. A concluding sentence closes the paragraph so that the reader is not left expecting more.

1. Sometimes a concluding sentence reminds the reader of the main point by restating the topic sentence in different words.

Indeed, a beach is a place to have fun all year.

In short, you have three delicious choices when you order Thai curry.

2. Sometimes a concluding sentence summarizes the main points.

In short, flight attendants are friendly, self-confident, and strong.

To summarize, employers look for dependable, responsible team players.

Writer's Tip

Do NOT introduce a new idea in your concluding sentence. Just review or repeat the ideas you have already discussed. Don't add anything new.

WRONG Also, flight attendants love to travel.

WRONG In conclusion, I hope to become a flight attendant some day.

Use a transition signal to tell your reader that this is the end of your paragraph. The following chart lists several conclusion signals. Notice that there is always a comma after conclusion signals.

Conclusion Signals ¹		
To conclude,	To sum up,	In brief,
In conclusion,	To summarize,	In short,
	In summary,	Indeed,

¹ Many teachers tell students not to use the phrases *In conclusion* and *In summary*, but they are listed here because students encounter them in reading.

PRACTICE 6
Concluding
Sentences

- A. Read the following paragraphs. Then choose the best concluding sentence for it.

Paragraph 1

There are two reasons I love big cities. First of all, big cities are alive 24/7. You can go shopping, see a movie, exercise at a gym, get something to eat, or go roller skating at any time of the day or night. Second, I love big cities because of their anonymity.² You can be completely invisible in big cities. No one watches your daily comings and goings.³ Neighbors don't bother you as long as you don't bother them. You can stay out all night or stay home all day, and no one cares.

- a. To sum up, I love big cities because you can be independent.
- b. In short, big cities attract me because there are so many things to do.
- c. In brief, I like big cities because of their energy and anonymity.

Paragraph 2

There are two reasons I hate big cities. First of all, big cities are full of noise 24/7. You can hear horns honking, traffic roaring, music blaring, and people talking at all hours of the day and night. It is never quiet in a big city. Second, I hate big cities because of their anonymity. No one knows or cares about you. Neighbors who have lived next door to each other for many years don't even know each others' names. You can be very lonely in a big city.

- a. In brief, big cities are noisy, lonely places to live.
- b. In conclusion, I prefer to live in a small town, where it is quieter and people are friendlier.
- c. Also, big cities have a lot of crime.

(continued on next page)

²anonymity: condition of being unknown

³comings and goings: activities; times when you leave your house and return to it (informal)

B. Write a concluding sentence for the following paragraphs.

Paragraph 1

Goldfish have three characteristics that make them good pets. First of all, goldfish are very quiet. They don't bark, howl, meow, chirp, squawk, screech,¹ or race around the house at night while you and your neighbors are trying to sleep. Second, they are economical. You can buy a goldfish at your local pet store for about 50¢, and a small bowl for it costs less than \$3.00. Water is practically free. Also, they eat only a pinch of dried fish food daily, so their food bill is quite low. Third, goldfish are very well behaved. They don't have teeth, so they can't chew your furniture or bite your guests. They don't ever go outside, so they can't dig holes in your garden. In addition, you don't have to spend hours teaching them commands, such as "Sit!" or "Lie down!" _____

Paragraph 2

The island nation of Singapore, the smallest nation in Asia, is one of the best cities in the world to live in and to visit. First of all, Singapore is a very safe city. It has a very low crime rate. Citizens and tourists alike can walk the streets at night without fear. Also, Singapore is very clean. The nation has very strong antilittering laws, so there is almost no litter anywhere. Third, Singaporeans come from many different racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, but they live together in peace. Finally, Singapore's economy is one of the healthiest in Asia, so its people enjoy a very high standard of living. _____

C. Choose five topics from Practice 3 on page 44 and write a concluding sentence for each. Try to use a different conclusion signal in each one.

1. Topic 1

To sum up, neatness, cheerfulness, helpfulness, and financial
responsibility are qualities of good roommates.

¹bark, howl, meow, chirp, squawk, screech: different animal sounds

Kinds of Sentences

In this book, you studied three kinds of sentences in English: simple, compound, and complex.

- A **simple sentence** is one independent clause.

It's hot today.

John and Mary are engaged to be married.

I go to school during the day and work at night.

- A **compound sentence** is two independent clauses joined together by a comma and a coordinating conjunction.

Her daughter is a doctor, and her son is a dentist.

Yesterday was a beautiful day, so we went to the beach.

- A **complex sentence** is one independent clause + one (or more) dependent clauses.

As soon as we arrived, it started to rain.

The sun came out again after we drove back home.

Coordinating Conjunctions (Coordinators)

Coordinating conjunctions connect grammatically equal parts of a sentence. The parts can be words, phrases, or clauses. There are seven coordinating conjunctions: *for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet*, and *so*. We sometimes call them “fan boys” to make it easy to remember them:

for and nor but or yet so

The four coordinating conjunctions covered in this book are *and*, *but*, *or*, and *so*.

Coordinating Conjunction	Use	Examples
and	Connects equal similar ideas	John likes to fish and hunt. John likes to fish, and he often goes fishing.
but	Connects equal different ideas	They were poor but happy. The soup was good, but it wasn't hot.
or	Connects equal choices	Do you prefer coffee or tea? You can renew a driver's license by mail, or you can do it in person.
so	Connects a reason to a result	I did not eat breakfast this morning, so I am a little hungry.

Subordinating Conjunctions (Subordinators)

A subordinating conjunction is the first word in a dependent clause. Subordinating conjunctions used in this book are the following.

Subordinating Conjunctions	
To tell a time	
after	He goes to school after he finishes work.
as soon as	She felt better as soon as she took the medicine.
before	Before you apply to college, you have to take an entrance exam.
since	It has been a year since I left home.
until	We can't leave the room until everyone finishes the test.
when	When you start college, you usually have to take placement tests in math and English.
whenever	Whenever I don't sleep well, I feel sick the next day.
while	Several overcrowded busses passed while they were waiting.
To give a reason	
because	Jack excels at sports because he trains hard.
since	Since she works out daily, Jill is in great condition.
To state a condition	
if	If you eat too much sugar, you will gain weight.

Subordinating Words for Adjective Clauses

Adjectives clauses are a kind of dependent clause. The three subordinating words for adjective clauses, which are also called relative pronouns, covered in this book are *who*, *which*, and *that*.

Relative Pronouns	
To refer to people	
who	Alfredo, who is from Switzerland, speaks three languages. People who speak several languages are valuable employees.
To refer to animals and things	
which that	My new cell phone, which I just got yesterday, stopped working today. Yesterday I received an e-mail that I did not understand. Yesterday I received an e-mail which I did not understand.

Transition Signals

To show time order	
First, . . .	Next, . . .
First of all, . . .	After that, . . .
Second, . . .	Then . . .
Third, . . .	Finally, . . .
To show listing order	
First, . . .	Also, . . .
First of all, also . . .
Second,, also.
Third, . . .	Finally, . . .
In addition, . . .	
To show space order	
On the right, . . .	Above the . . .
On the left, . . .	On one side of the . . .
In the center, . . .	On the other side of the . . .
In the middle, . . .	Opposite the . . .
Next to the . . .	Near the . . .
Beside the . . .	Under the . . .
Between the . . .	
To give a reason	
The first reason is (that) . . .	
The second reason is (that) . . .	
The most important reason is (that) . . .	
To give an example	
For example, such as _____
For instance,, such as _____
	. . ., for example _____
	. . ., for instance _____

To give an opinion	
In my opinion, . . .	I believe (that) . . .
In my view, . . .	I feel (that) . . .
According to _____, . . .	I think (that) . . .
To add a conclusion	
In brief, . . .	To conclude, . . .
Indeed, . . .	To summarize, . . .
In conclusion, . . .	To sum up, . . .
In short, . . .	For these reasons, . . .