

Introducing Paragraphs (2)

Lecture: 1

Part: 2

Introducing Paragraphs

Parts of the Paragraph

Parts of the paragraph:

- a. Topic sentences
- b. Supporting sentences
- c. Concluding sentence

In English, the basic unit of composition is the paragraph. A paragraph consists of several sentences that are grouped together. This group of sentences together discuss **one** main subject. Paragraphs have three parts. These three parts are the topic sentence, the supporting sentences, and the concluding sentence.

The Topic Sentence

A topic sentence usually comes at the beginning of a paragraph; that is, it is usually the first sentence in a paragraph. More importantly, it is the most general sentence in a paragraph. What does "most general" mean? It means that there are not many details in the sentence, but that the sentence introduces an overall idea that you want to discuss later in the paragraph.

The Topic Sentence

My hometown, Dammam, is famous for several amazing natural features. First, it is noted for its beaches, which are clean and beautiful. Second, on the other side of the town there are wonderful farms with lots of palm trees.

Supporting Sentences

Consider again previous short paragraph:

My hometown, Dammam, is famous for several amazing natural features. First, it is noted for its beaches, which are clean and beautiful. Second, on the other side of the town there are wonderful farms with lots of palm trees.

When a reader reads a topic sentence, such as *My hometown, Dammam, is famous for several amazing natural features*, a *question* usually comes to the reader's mind. In this case, the question is, "*What* are the natural features that make Dammam famous?" The reader should then expect that the rest of the paragraph will give an *answer* to this question.

Now look at the sentences after the topic sentence. We can see that the second sentence in the paragraph, *First, it is noted for its beaches which are clean and beautiful*, indeed gives an answer to this question. That is, the second sentence gives some *explanation* for the fact that Dammam is a famous town.

Similarly, we can see that the third sentence also gives some explanation for the fact that Dammam is famous by giving another example of an *"amazing natural feature,"* in this case, the wonderful farms with the palm trees.

The second and third sentences are called *supporting sentences*. They are called "supporting" because they "support," or explain, the idea expressed in the topic sentence.

The Concluding Sentence

In paragraphs you will sometimes see a sentence at the end of the paragraph which summarizes the information that has been presented. This is the concluding sentence. You can think of a concluding sentence as a sort of topic sentence in reverse.

You can understand concluding sentences with this example. Consider a hamburger that you can buy at a fast-food restaurant. A hamburger has a top bun (a kind of bread), meat, cheese, lettuce, and other elements in the middle of the hamburger, and a bottom bun.



Note how the top bun and the bottom bun are very similar. The top bun, in a way, is like a topic sentence, and the bottom bun is like the concluding sentence. Both buns "hold" the meat, onions, and so on. Similarly, the topic sentence and concluding sentence "hold" the supporting sentences in the paragraph.

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Notice how the concluding sentence, *These two landmarks are truly amazing and make my hometown a famous place*, summarizes the information in the paragraph. Notice also how the concluding sentence is similar to, but not exactly the same as, the topic sentence.

California

California is the most wonderful place to visit because of its variety of weather and its beautiful nature. Visitors to California can find any weather they like. They can find cool temperatures in the summer; also they can find warm weather in the winter. On the other hand, visitors can find the nature they like. They can find high mountains and low valleys. Visitors can find a huge forest, a dead desert, and a beautiful coast. So California is the most wonderful place to visit because of its weather and nature.

● Topic sentence ● Supporting sentences ● Concluding sentence

Canada

There are three reasons why Canada is one of the best countries in the world. First, Canada has an excellent health care system. Second, Canada has a high standard of education. Finally, Canada's cities are clean and efficiently managed. Canadian cities have many parks and lots of space for people to live. As a result, Canada is a desirable place to live.

● Topic sentence ● Supporting sentences ● Concluding sentence