

What Is a Paragraph?

A **paragraph** is a collection of sentences that describe, discuss, or explain one central idea. The three main parts of a paragraph are:

- the topic sentence
- the supporting detail sentences
- the concluding sentence

Every part has a specific function, and every part is important.

Concluding Sentences

A concluding sentence concludes, or wraps up, a paragraph.

Features of a Concluding Sentence

A concluding sentence has three main features:

1. It is usually the **last sentence of a paragraph**.
2. It lets the reader know that the paragraph has ended.
3. It brings the paragraph to a logical conclusion by doing one of these two actions:
 - a. Restating the **main idea** of the topic sentence.

Look at the concluding sentence in Paragraph 6, "Visiting Washington, DC":

Clearly, Washington, DC has a lot to offer its visitors!

- b. Offering a **suggestion**, giving an **opinion**, or making a **prediction**.

Look at the concluding sentence in Paragraph 1, "Changing a Tire on Your Car":

Following these steps will have you back on the road in no time. (prediction)



Transitions with Concluding Sentences

Here is a list of transitional words and phrases that are commonly used at the beginning of concluding sentences.

→	<u>as a result</u>	for this reason	in the end
→	because of this	hence	<u>overall</u>
	<u>Finally</u>	<u>in conclusion</u>	surely
	clearly	indeed	<u>therefore</u>
	<u>for these reasons</u>	in sum	thus

Examples:

In conclusion, successful businesses are the result of the actions of good workers.

Overall, buying a used car has more advantages than buying a new car.

ACTIVITY 17 Writing Concluding Sentences

Go back to Paragraph 2 (page 7) and Paragraph 5 (page 18). Write a concluding sentence for each paragraph. Use a different type of concluding statement for each one, and try to use transitional words and phrases. Circle the function of each concluding statement.

1. Paragraph 2 (page 7)

Topic: Breakfast

Paragraph 2

Not eating breakfast every day can have
bad consequences for our body.

Without that morning meal, the body does not wake up completely. It is lacking the necessary fuel for energy. By lunchtime, people who **skip** breakfast tend to be overly hungry, so they will eat too much. Perhaps the most serious effect of not eating breakfast is that the body's **metabolism** will not work properly. It has been said for generations: "Breakfast is the most important meal of the day."

to skip: go without;
pass over

metabolism: chemical
process in the body
to maintain proper
functions

Concluding sentence:

What does the concluding statement do?

- ☐ restates the main idea ☐ offers a suggestion ☐ gives an opinion ☐ makes a prediction

2. Paragraph 5 (page 18)

Topic: Restaurants

Paragraph 5

The Features of a Good Restaurant

Certain qualities are typical of good restaurants. These restaurants provide fast and friendly service, with servers who are friendly and courteous at all times. They make sure that customers' needs are met throughout the meal. 1 Since customers are choosing to eat out, obviously the quality of the food is important. A good restaurant uses fresh ingredients in its dishes. 2 Some of the best-quality cheeses can be imported from France. 3 Good restaurants also have a pleasant atmosphere. They are clean and well maintained, and they also pay attention to details such as decor, lighting, and music.

Concluding sentence:

What does the concluding statement do?

- ☐ restates the main idea ☐ offers a suggestion ☐ gives an opinion ☐ makes a prediction

Four Features of a Well-Written Paragraph

Good paragraphs have four key features in common.

1. A paragraph has a topic sentence that states the main idea. ✓

The topic sentence is like a short summary of the paragraph. It lets the reader know what the paragraph will be about. It contains the main subject and a controlling idea.

2. All of the sentences are about one topic. ✓

Each sentence of the paragraph relates to the topic sentence and its controlling idea. Focusing on one topic helps to maintain the coherence of the paragraph.

3. The first sentence of a paragraph is indented.

Remember that the first line of a paragraph starts about a half inch in from the margin.

4. The last sentence, or concluding sentence, brings the paragraph to a logical conclusion. ✓

Sometimes the concluding sentence is a restatement of the topic sentence. At other times, writers offer a suggestion, opinion, or prediction based on their purpose.

Does your paragraph have all these features from above? Yes/ No



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ACTIVITY 18 Analyzing the Features of a Paragraph

Discuss the Preview Questions with a classmate. Then, read the paragraph and answer the questions that follow.

Preview Questions

1. What do you know about professional cycling?
2. Do you know of any recent problems in the sport?

Paragraph 7

The Dark Side of Cycling

The illegal drug use that has **plagued** the world of professional cycling for decades must be stopped. Certain drugs help cyclists ride faster and farther than normal. Some of the drugs work by increasing the number of red blood cells in the body. While the drugs might help the athletes to perform better, there can be terrible side effects. For example, in the year and a half before the 2004 Tour de France, nine professional cyclists died from **overdoses** of illegal drugs. Several professional baseball players in the United States have also been involved in similar drug **controversies**. Despite the danger, more and more cyclists are turning to these drugs to gain an advantage over their competition. It is unfortunate that these athletes value winning more than their lives.

to plague: to cause severe problems

an overdose: too much medicine or too many drugs

a controversy: a disagreement about an issue



Post-Reading

1. What is the topic of the paragraph? _____

2. What is the topic sentence? _____

3. What is the concluding sentence? _____

4. Is the concluding sentence a restatement, a suggestion, an opinion, or a prediction? _____

5. Which sentence does not belong? _____

6. Explain why the sentence you have chosen does not belong. _____

7. What is the writer's main purpose for writing this paragraph? _____

8. Can you suggest any ways to improve this paragraph? _____



ACTIVITY 19 Bringing It All Together

Read the paragraphs. Underline the topic sentence of each one. Then circle the sentence that is not a good supporting sentence. (There is one in each paragraph.) Write a concluding sentence on the lines that follow each paragraph. If possible, use transitional words and phrases from the box on page 27 and Useful Vocabulary for Better Writing on pages 226–229.

Paragraph 8

Tsunamis

Tsunamis are groups of waves that are born from natural **phenomena** such as landslides, eruptions from volcanoes, and, most typically, earthquakes. They can occur in lakes or oceans. The major danger of tsunamis is the size of the waves. While regular ocean waves are created by wind, tsunamis get their start from extremely powerful shake-ups in the earth. In the open water, they can reach a width of 100 kilometers. As tsunamis get closer to shore, they slow down but grow in height. Some tsunamis can be as tall as 30 meters. Earthquakes are scarier than tsunamis. The force of a tsunami can destroy countless homes and other structures before it finally subsides. _____

a **phenomenon**:
an occurrence