

The Four Parts of a Paragraph

A. Read the paragraph below and answer the questions.

1. Dogs make better companions than cats. 2. The main reason why many people prefer dogs to cats is their loyalty. 3. They show this by being obedient and showing affection to their masters. 4. Cats, on the other hand, cannot be trained and treat their owners with indifference. 5. Secondly, dogs are more fun to spend time with. You can take your dog running, swimming at the beach or even play frisbee. 7. Conversely, cats like to do their own thing and are not inclined to join in play such as chasing a ball. 8. Finally, dogs help make your home more secure. 9. If an unknown person tries to enter your home or property, a dog will alert you with their bark or even attack the intruder. 10. A cat, on the other hand, will stay silent and let anyone enter your home. 11. To sum up, dogs are the best choice as a pet because they are loyal, fun and provide security.

- Which sentence expresses the main idea of the paragraph?
- Which sentences give reasons to support the main idea?
- Which sentences explain or give examples of the first reason?
- Which sentence repeats the main idea and summarises the supporting ideas?

B. Match the sentence halves together.

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| 1. A topic sentence expresses the main idea | a. the main idea expressed in the topic sentence is true or valid. |
| 2. Supporting sentences help show that | b. help develop supporting ideas. |
| 3. Details can include examples or explanations to | c. in different words and may also summarise the supporting ideas. |
| 4. A concluding sentence restates the main idea | d. of the paragraph and all sentences in the paragraph support it. |

C. Read the definition of a topic sentence. Then, use the prompts to write your own topic sentences that contain a topic and a controlling idea.

A topic sentence is usually the first sentence in a paragraph and expresses the main idea or central focus of the paragraph. It is made up of a topic and a controlling idea. The topic names the subject of the paragraph while the controlling idea gives the main idea about the topic.

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Example: Topic: football

Controlling idea: popular

Football is the most popular team sport in the world.

1. Topic: eating healthy

Controlling idea: benefits

2. Topic: smoking

Controlling idea: banned

3. Topic: global warming

Controlling idea: causes

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D. For the following topic sentences, write one supporting idea sentence. Then, develop the supporting idea by writing another sentence that gives an example or an explanation.

Example: Thailand is an enjoyable country to visit.

One reason to go to Thailand is that it has a very good cuisine. For instance, dishes like tom yum kung are well-known for their fresh ingredients and strong spicy flavours.

1. Regular exercise has a number of important benefits.

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2. Living in the city centre has three key advantages.

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3. There are a number of important steps in making a good sandwich.

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4. There are three main characteristics that all successful language learners share.

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5. University education should be made freely available to all citizens.

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E. Paraphrase the topic sentences below in your own words to make concluding sentences using the transition phrases: 'In conclusion', 'In summary', or 'To sum up'.

Example: Spain is an enjoyable place to visit.

In summary, a country that offers holiday fun is Spain.

1. Mammals and reptiles have two important differences.

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2. Advertising fast food to children should be banned.

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3. Cats make better house pets than dogs for three simple reasons.

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4. An academic paragraph consists of four basic parts.

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