



Fundamental Unit 01
Level: First Year LMD.
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Learning Hours: 4 hours 30mn per week

Title: Reading & Writing
Period: Semesters 1
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LESSON 5: THE STRUCTURE OF A PARAGRAPH -1

Read the following paragraph then answer the following questions :

Switzerland - Something Interesting at Every Turn *By Ken Jones*

If you dream of travelling to a country with beautiful mountains, delicious food, wonderful places to go sightseeing and polite people, you should visit Switzerland. If you look at the map, the first thing you notice is that Switzerland has many mountains, including some of the highest in Europe. Climbing or skiing down the mountains is great fun. Another thing you will notice is that Switzerland shares its borders with five different countries: France, Germany, Italy, Austria and Liechtenstein. In fact, there are four official languages in Switzerland: German, French, Italian and Romansch. All these groups of people make Swiss culture very interesting. France is also a great place to visit. Finally, Switzerland has many cities and interesting places to visit. Cities such as Bern have modern buildings like the Paul Klee Zentrum, yet the traditional alpine refuges in the mountains show that the country's old traditions are still alive. All the people, places and things to see definitely make Switzerland a great place for a holiday.

1. How many sentences are there in the paragraph ?
2. What is the topic of the paragraph ?.....
3. What the main idea of the paragraph ?
.....
4. There is irrelevant sentence in the paragraph. Find it and underline it.
5. What is the most general sentence in the paragraph ?
.....
6. What is the function of the last sentence in the paragraph ?
.....

7. Mention one of the writer's supporting details.

.....

What makes a paragraph :

A paragraph is a group of sentences related to a particular **topic**, or central **theme**. Every paragraph has a main idea. **The main idea** is the most important piece of information the author wants you to know about the concept of that paragraph. When authors write they have an idea in mind that they are trying to get across.

A writer will state his/her main idea explicitly somewhere in the paragraph. That main idea may be stated at the beginning of the paragraph, in the middle, or at the end. The sentence in which the main idea is stated is the **topic sentence** of that paragraph.

A paragraph has three basic parts: **the topic sentence**, **the supporting sentences**, and **the concluding sentence**.

1. **the topic sentence** : (the main idea of the paragraph).
2. **the supporting sentences** : these are sentences that talk about and explain the topic sentence. They are more detailed ideas that follow the topic sentence. Their details support the main idea by telling how, what, when, where, why, how much, or how many...etc. and may illustrate with examples and statistics.
3. **the concluding sentence** : This may be found as the last sentence of a paragraph. It can finish a paragraph by repeating the main idea or just giving a final comment about the topic.

The outline of a paragraph:

A common way to develop a paragraph uses supporting sentences illustrated by specific details or examples. A paragraph like this can give 3 reasons that explain the main idea of the topic. Each reason is then explained with **details** and **examples**.

- **The topic sentence**
- **The body**
 - **The supporting sentence 1**
 - details
 - details
 - **The supporting sentence 2**
 - details
 - details
 - **The supporting sentence 3**
 - details

- details
- **The concluding sentence**

Practice 1 : Examine the following topic sentences and identify the topic and the focus or the main idea of the paragraph.

- ✓ There are many reasons why pollution in china is the worst in the world.
- ✓ To be an excellent student requires certain characteristics.
- ✓ Cooking requires a number of different skills.
- ✓ Having a first child is difficult because of the significant adjustments in your life.
- ✓ Tea has long been studied and enjoyed for its beneficial properties.
- ✓ Learning foreign languages creates job opportunities.
- ✓ My hometown is a great place to live.
- ✓ When I was a child, I thought my grandfather was superman.
- ✓ Online learning has its problems

How to Write a good topic sentence.

A good topic sentence has the following features:

- ✓ **It controls or guides the whole paragraph:** when you read the topic sentence, you know what to expect in the paragraph.
- ✓ **A good topic sentence is not a general fact that everyone accepts as true.**
For example, “libraries have books”.
- ✓ **A good topic sentence is specific:** “Tea is delicious” is not a good topic sentence because the information in the sentences is too general. The reader doesn’t know what to expect in the paragraph. If you want to write a paragraph about tea, make your topic sentence more specific, such as “green tea has many health benefits”
- ✓ **A good topic sentence is not too specific.** “This dictionary contains more than 42000 words” limits the topic too much. There is nothing else for the writer to say.
- ✓ **A good topic sentence has controlling ideas.** Words or phrases that help you guide the flow of ideas in the paragraph.

Practice 2 : Write a topic sentence for these topics :

1. An important event in life.
.....
2. A favourite destination for the holidays.
.....
3. The best pet.

.....
4. The ideal job
.....

Practice 3 : Rewrite the topic sentence of the paragraph using your own words
.....

Practice 4 : Read each of the following paragraphs and write a topic sentence :

1
.....

When you travel to Europe, you can visit many different countries, such as England, Spain, Germany, and Greece. Many different languages are spoken in Europe, and the cultures of the countries are all unique. Also, the weather in Europe varies a lot. Countries in the north are very cold, and you can go skiing. In the south, there are beautiful beaches, and these are popular places for vacations. As you can see, Europe is a very interesting place with different kinds of people and many possibilities.

2.
.....

Her name is Mrs. Graham, and she not only teaches music in my school, but she is also a friend to all of her students. In class, she teaches us to love music, and she introduces us to different songs and styles of music. She taught me to play the piano and violin, and I am sure that I will enjoy playing these instruments for the rest of my life. Mrs. Graham often tells interesting stories in class, and she always helps us or gives us advice when we have problems. Mrs. Graham is more than just a music teacher, she is like a star in the sky.

3.
.....

Family is very important. My family has six people: my grandma, my parents, myself, and my two brothers. My grandma loves me very much. When the weather is cold, she always tells me to wear more clothes. Although I often argue with my brothers, they will give me support when I need it. My parents have taken care of me since I was born. My definition of family is an organization which is full of love.

THE BODY OF THE PARAGRAPH :

After you write a topic sentence, you need to give information in the form of supporting sentences and details. This is called the “body” of the paragraph. You might tell a story in the body, you might give your reasons for your opinion, or you might provide numbers, facts, and

statistics. You need to make sure that every sentence relates to the topic sentence. This means that every sentence should be about the topic sentence.

Practice 5 : Read the following topic sentences and then write three (3) supporting sentences

Topic sentence 1 : *Although my pet cat sleeps all day long, I'm always glad that she is in my house.*

Supporting sentence 1

.....

Supporting sentence 2

.....

Supporting sentence 3

.....

Topic sentence 2 : *Education is important to reduce crime rates in our society.*

Supporting sentence 1

.....

Supporting sentence 2

.....

Supporting sentence 3

.....

Practice 6 : Read the paragraphs below. In each paragraph, there are two sentences that do not relate to the topic sentence. Cross out these sentences.

Books are like windows to the world, and that is why reading is my favorite hobby. I first fell in love with books at the age of 5, when I was first learning to read. My mother gave me the book *Green Eggs and Ham* and helped me read it. She bought this book at a grocery store. As I grew older, I discovered famous authors and different kinds of stories. Recently, I read all of the *Harry Potter* books, and these are now my favorite books. The *Harry Potter* movies are very good, too. When I go to college, I hope to major in literature and continue exploring the wonderful world of books.

The computer is the most important modern invention because it has changed how we live. In the past, students often went to the library to do research, but now, most research is done on a computer using the internet. There is a library near my house, but I don't go there very often. Also, computers have changed how people communicate. People write emails instead of letters, and with the invention of services like Skype, telephones may one day be replaced by computers. I can use my telephone to go on the internet and check my email. Finally, computers have made travelling much easier; we can buy airplane tickets using a computer, and GPS technology makes it easier to reach our destination. In sum, the invention of the computer has given us new possibilities and conveniences which now seem hard to live without.