**What is a Paragraph?**

**Definition:**

A collection of related sentences dealing with one topic

**What a Paragraph Must Contain**

1 Topic Sentence

3 Supporting Sentences

1 Concluding Sentence

**Topic Sentence**

* Expresses the main idea of the paragraph
* Is usually the first sentence of a paragraph
* Contains the central idea
* Is the most general sentence in a paragraph

For Example: There are three reasons why Canada is one of the best countries in the world.

**Supporting Sentence**

* Develops, explains and supports the main idea (topic sentence) of the paragraph
* Contains facts, examples and details
* Explains why the main idea (topic sentence) is true

For Example: 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.

**Concluding Sentence**

* Is usually the last sentence of the paragraph
* Restates the main idea (topic sentence)
* Is used to finish the paragraph or prepare the reader for the following paragraph

For Example: As a result, Canada is a desirable place to live.

**How to calculate words to stay within given word limit**

STEP1: Students to write first three lines

STEP2: Students to count number of words in each line separately. For example: Student ‘A’ has 10 words in line 1, 11 in line 2 and 10 in line three

STEP3: Add them together i.e. 10+11+10 = 31

STEP4: Divide the sum by 3 to get average word count per line. 31 ÷ 3 = 10.33 which is approximately 10 words per line

STEP5: Divide the lower word limit by the approximate number.

For example: 150 ÷ 10 = 15

STEP6: It is now clear that the Student ‘A’ has to write a minimum of 15 lines

STEP7: Divide the upper word limit by the approximate number to know maximum number of lines.

**Reasons for Paragraph Changing**

**Ti** - stands for **Time**, so start a new paragraph for a different time period.

**P** - stands for **Place**, so start a new paragraph for each new place.

**To** - stands for **Topic**, so start a new paragraph for each new topic, idea or subject.

**P** - stands for **Person**, so start a new paragraph for each new speaker.

**Types of Paragraphs:**

**A paragraph is a group of sentences that tell about a single idea.**

**A paragraph consists of a topic sentence, supporting details, and a concluding sentence.**

* **The topic sentence tells the reader the main idea of a paragraph.  It is usually the first sentence, but sometimes it's found in the middle or the end of a paragraph.  Sometimes, the topic sentence can be more than one sentence.**
* **The supporting sentences give details or support about the main idea.  These sentences do not talk about other topics, but stay focused on supporting the main idea.**
* **The concluding sentence sums up the paragraph or gives a closing thought to bring the paragraph to a clear end.**

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| --- | --- |
|  I had a wonderful time when I visited my grandparents’ farm last weekend.  | Topic sentence |
| First, Grandma let me milk one of the cows. After that, Grandpa took me out to plow a field on his tractor. He even let me sit in the driver’s seat when the engine was off. On Sunday, we went fishing after doing all the farm chores. | Supporting Details |
| I hated to leave the farm when the weekend was over. | Concluding Sentence |

** There are different kinds of paragraphs.  They are either narrative, descriptive, expository, or persuasive.**

* **A narrative paragraph tells a story, presenting events in the order that they happened.**
* **A descriptive paragraph tells what a person, a place, or thing, or an idea is like.**
* **An expository paragraph gives directions or explains information.**
* **A persuasive paragraph presents reasons, arguments, and opinions to win over the reader to a certain point of view.**

** Good writers organize paragraphs so that readers can easily understand them.  Common ways to organize paragraphs are: time order, location order, order of importance, cause-effect order, and comparison-contrast order.**

* **Time order/ Chronological paragraphs tell the events in the order in which they happened.**

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| From *America Will Be* |
|  By the late 1700s, some Quakers spoke out against slavery. In the late 1700s, some leaders of the American Revolution argued that slavery did not belong in a nation where “all men are created equal.” By the 1830s, more and more Americans believed that slavery should end. These people were called abolitionists. |

* **Location order paragraphs describe a place.  They may describe things from moving from top to bottom, from left to right, or in a circle.**

|  |
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| from *Danny the Champion of the World* by Ronald Dahl |
|  The filling station itself had only two pumps. There was a wooden shed behind the pumps that served as an office. There was nothing in the office except and old table and a cash register to put money into. |

* **Order of importance paragraphs begin with the least important idea and move towards the most important idea.**

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| from *Lincoln: A Photobiography* by Russell Freedman |
|  While the North was free soil, it was hardly a paradise for blacks. Racial prejudice was a fact of everyday life. Most Yankee states had enacted strict “black laws.” In Illinois, Lincoln’s home state, blacks paid taxes but could not vote, hold political office, serve on juries, testify in court, or attend schools. They had a hard time finding jobs. Often they sold themselves as “indentures” for a period of twenty years – a form of voluntary slavery – just to eat and have a place to live. |

* **Cause-Effect Order paragraphs talk about the cause of events and the effects of events.  In other words why an event happened and what happened.  The writer might begin with the cause and then describe the effects or might begin with the effects and then the cause.**

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| from *“Blood”* |
|  When a blood vessel in the skin is cut, some blood leaks out. However, platelets soon clump together at the break in the blood vessel. The platelets give off a substance that causes a tangle of sticky fibers to form. Platelets, fibers, and trapped blood cells clump together to form a clot…. The clot seals the break in the blood vessel. The bleeding stops. |

* **Comparison-Contrast Order paragraphs introduce something new by comparing or contrasting it with something the reader knows already.  These paragraphs also can show how two things are similar and/or different.**

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| from *Scott Foresman Science* |
|  The owl’s wing is somewhat like your arm. It has the same three parts – the hand, the lower arm, and the upper arm. The owl can bend its upper arm the way you can bend your upper arm. The owl flaps its large wings to lift itself into the air. |

**Connectives:**

**are words and phrases to link or extend sentences, ideas and paragraphs -**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| However | furthermore | moreover | similarly | nevertheless | in addition | what is more | in reflection |
| considering this | nonetheless | while | contrary to this | consequently | ultimately | in conclusion | in other words |
| to recap | in summary | to summarise | in summation | therefore | although | whereas | whatever |
| besides | henceforward | then | yet | alternatively | since | notwithstanding | particularly |
| on might consider | especially | above all | significantly | notably | most notably | likewise | otherwise |
| unlike | instead of | on the other hand | it is noteworthy | one should recognise | besides | henceforward | until |
| because | after | as a consequence | such as | for example | illustrating | firstly | secondly |
| thirdly | but | afterwards | except | apart from | too |  |  |

**Using Connectives**

Connectives are words and sometimes short phrases which we use to link or *connect* sentences, ideas and sometimes whole paragraphs together. We can also use connectives to introduce quotations or give an example which is particularly useful when building an essay in which you need to provide examples and/or evidence that you are arguing is plausible (believable). We can use connectives to introduce an alternative point of view or add a contrasting example to our work, which has the added bonus of making our writing sound more balanced and *objective*.

**Using connectives to extend an idea, sentence or paragraph**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| furthermore | Similarly | in addition | what is more | moreover | equally | since |

Examples:

Reading widely is an excellent way of developing your creative writing ***since***it allows you to explore another writer's style as it develops on the page.

Eating too many sweets is bad for your teeth and ***what is more*** can also lead to weight gain over time.