

Basics

Once you have learnt how to write a good sentence, you are ready to move onto paragraphs. Well-written paragraphs are very important in any kind of academic writing, such as essays or reviews. Read this paragraph from a review, and see if you can come up with any ideas about what *makes it* a paragraph.

If you want a cool smartwatch, the Draco 3 probably isn't for you. The TR-5 is certainly more stylish than the Draco 3, and it has a larger range of apps. But if you are on the road a lot, and battery life is important to you, then the Draco 3 is a better option than the TR-5.

Did you notice there were three sentences? The rest of the Factsheet will help you to learn more about what the sentences of a paragraph do.

The academic context

Learning to write well-structured paragraphs will help you to produce better reviews/essays. It will make you more effective at writing assignments whilst at college or university.

Key features

- Paragraphs in the main part of a review or essay usually have at least three sentences.
 - 1 The first sentence – often called the topic sentence – should introduce the subject of the paragraph.
 - 2 The middle sentence(s) – often called the supporting sentence(s) – give more information about the subject.
 - 3 The final sentence – often called the concluding sentence – often sums up what was said, and sometimes makes a recommendation.
- Therefore, the sentences in a paragraph support *one* idea. If you change subject, you should begin a new paragraph.
- Paragraphs are also important because they break up a piece of writing, like an essay or review, into smaller, easier-to-read pieces.
- A well-written paragraph will make good use of linking words, as well as phrases for comparing and contrasting ideas. More work on using these language features in your writing can be found in **Link sentences** and **Compare and contrast**.

Challenges / difficulties

You must be clear about the ideas that you want to include in each paragraph. It is best to make an essay plan before writing. Your plan will contain these items:

- 1 First paragraph – introduce the topic and your main argument
- 2 Main body (one or two paragraphs) – state your main points
- 3 Final paragraph – sum up and give a final statement

You can then focus on the sentences of each paragraph, making certain they stick to the subject you have chosen.

How can I develop this skill?

Pay attention to paragraphs when you are reading in English. In reviews or essays, try to notice whether the main body paragraphs follow the structure from the Key features section.

Learning outcome

You will understand why you need paragraphs in your writing. You will feel more confident planning your paragraphs and writing topic sentences, supporting sentences and concluding sentences.

Theory to practice

Read the three sentences. Match the sentence types (1–3) to the sentences to put them in order and make a paragraph. Then discuss your answers with a partner and see if you agree.

- 1 Topic sentence
- 2 Supporting sentence
- 3 Concluding sentence

- ☐ Therefore, it seems there are many reasons to want to be a police officer.
- ☐ Some people believe that being a police officer is a very good job.
- ☐ They say it is interesting because no two days are ever the same; and added to that, you are often able to help people, so you feel satisfied.

Ways to get more practice

With your partner, choose another job and write a paragraph together about it. Check you have a topic sentence, a supporting sentence and a concluding sentence.