

## Parts of a Strong Paragraph

A paragraph is a group of many sentences that describe the same idea. A paragraph could be three sentences long, or it could be ten sentences long! There are many ways to write a paragraph, and no exact number of sentences. Here are some things every strong paragraph has:

- **A topic sentence** is the start of a strong paragraph. This sentence is an introduction for the paragraph. It tells the main idea of the whole paragraph. A topic sentence does not include small details.
- **Supporting details** are in the middle of a paragraph. These sentences explain the main idea. They give extra details that the topic sentence did not explain.
- **A conclusion sentence** ends a strong paragraph. It is a short summary of the paragraph's main idea. It might sound similar to the topic sentence!

Let's look at these pieces in an example:

The topic sentence, supporting details, and conclusion sentence work together in a strong paragraph. They help you explain your idea. And, they help readers understand your writing! When one of those pieces is missing, the paragraph can be confusing. Strong paragraphs use a topic sentence, supporting details, and a conclusion sentence to write clearly.

1. What is the purpose of a topic sentence?
  - a. to summarize the details in a paragraph
  - b. to explain details supporting a main idea
  - c. to introduce the main idea of a paragraph
  - d. to make a new paragraph sound interesting
2. How many sentences does a strong paragraph have?
  - a. 3
  - b. 5
  - c. 10
  - d. no exact number
3. Why are supporting details important?
  - a. They explain the main idea.
  - b. They make a paragraph longer.
  - c. They describe the topic sentences.
  - d. They give short summaries of the paragraph.

Molly is writing a paragraph for science class. She has a topic sentence and conclusion sentence. But, she needs help adding supporting details.

Here is Molly's outline:

- *there are three big reasons why Earth supports life.*
- *Details?*
- *altogether, our atmosphere, water cycle, and distance from the Sun support life on Earth!*

4. Which sentence would be the best supporting detail for Molly's paragraph?
  - a. Snow and rain are types of precipitation.
  - b. All living things on Earth are called organisms.
  - c. Earth is one of the eight planets in our Solar System.
  - d. The atmosphere protects life from harmful energy in space.
5. What is a change Molly should make to her paragraph?
  - a. Molly should write a new conclusion.
  - b. Molly should write a new topic sentence.
  - c. Molly should add punctuation to her sentences.
  - d. Molly should capitalize the first letters of her sentences.
6. What is the verb in Molly's conclusion sentence?
  - a. altogether
  - b. atmosphere
  - c. Earth
  - d. support
7. How does Molly's conclusion sentence connect to her topic sentence?
  - a. The conclusion and topic sentences both explain details.
  - b. The topic and conclusion sentences both introduce main ideas.
  - c. The conclusion lists the three big reasons from the topic sentence.
  - d. The topic sentence summarizes main ideas in the conclusion sentence.
8. Write one more supporting detail sentence for Molly's paragraph.

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Here are 3 things to check when writing a **topic sentence**:

1. A topic sentence **tells the main idea of the whole paragraph.**
2. A topic sentence **does not include small details.**
3. A topic sentence **uses correct capitalization, spelling, and punctuation in a complete sentence.**

These topic sentences have some mistakes. Find the errors and circle each check that you need to fix in these sentences.

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|--|---|---|---|
| <b>9.</b> Football players use equipment to stay safe, and football was invented over a hundred years ago. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| <b>10.</b> Important ships.  | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| <b>11.</b> astronauts use many tools to complete science experiments in space                              | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| <b>12.</b> Plants, like my favorite flower tulips, use photosynthesis to get energy.                       | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| <b>13.</b> My name is Dee, and I am writing that cats use adaptations.                                     | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Correct the mistakes you found by filling in the blanks.

**14.** Football players use equipment to stay safe \_\_\_\_\_

**15.** Important ships \_\_\_\_\_.

**16.** \_\_\_\_\_stronauts use many tools to complete science experiments in space\_\_\_\_\_

**17.** Plants \_\_\_\_\_ use photosynthesis to get energy.

**18.** \_\_\_\_\_

Carter is writing a paragraph about sports equipment. These are his notes:

- *equipment for safety*
- *stops injuries for players*
- *helmets, knee pads, shoulder pads all protect body parts*
- *different sports have different equipment*
- *my favorite sport is football*
- *things like goals and balls are also equipment*
- *safety equipment is in some rules*
- *sports are fun*

**19.** Write a topic sentence for Carter's paragraph:

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**20.** Write two detail sentences for Carter's paragraph:

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**21.** Write a conclusion sentence for Carter's paragraph:

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Check! Do your sentences all do their jobs? Could you put them together to make a strong paragraph?