

SCIENTIFIC ENGLISH

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Course 2: Paragraphs

WHAT IS A PARAGRAPH?

- A paragraph is a component of fictional prose and non-fiction writings.
- When writing essays, research papers, books, etc., new paragraphs are indented to show their beginnings. Each **new paragraph begins with a new indentation.**
- The purpose of a paragraph is to express a speaker's thoughts on a particular point in a clear way that is unique and specific to that paragraph. In other words, paragraphs **shouldn't be mixing thoughts or ideas.** When a new idea is introduced, generally, a writer will introduce a new paragraph.

AN EFFECTIVE PARAGRAPH

- Presents **a single idea**
- Begins with **a topic sentence** that makes this single idea evident
- Contains support in form of **sentences** that convey this single idea
- Is strategically **organized** to maintain flow
- Maintains your essay's **objective**
- Informs and entertains your reader about your paper's **overall idea**.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A PARAGRAPH

- There are four essential elements that an effective paragraph should consistently contain:
 1. Unity,
 2. Coherence,
 3. A topic sentence,
 4. and sufficient development.

1- UNITY

- In order for a paragraph to maintain a sense of unity, the paragraph must focus solely on a single idea, point, or argument that is being discussed. Therefore, the paragraph should not begin to stray and develop new ideas. If you begin to write sentence that wander from the paragraph's main idea, then it is time to start a new paragraph.

EXAMPLE:

Indentation

.... Parasitic infections cause a tremendous burden of disease in both the tropics and subtropics as well as in more temperate climates. Of all parasitic diseases, malaria causes the most deaths globally. Malaria kills more than 400,000 people each year, most of them young children in sub-Saharan Africa.

Indentation

→ The Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs), which have suffered from a lack of attention by the public health community, include parasitic diseases such as lymphatic filariasis, onchocerciasis, and Guinea worm disease. The NTDs affect more than 1 billion people worldwide, largely in rural areas of low-income countries. These diseases extract a large toll on endemic populations, including lost ability to attend school or work, stunting of growth in children, impairment of cognitive skills and development in young children, and the serious economic burden placed on entire countries.

- We can observe that each new paragraph began with a new indentation.
- The text in the example talks about parasitic infections; in the first paragraph, the author determined the gravity of parasitic infection in general and mentioned the most deadly (malaria).
- When the author wanted to give more details about the less common parasitic infections, he began a new paragraph.

2- COHERENCE

- Coherence is more commonly referred to as **the flow of the writing**. When a paragraph flows, the reader will be able to understand the main idea that he have presented.
- How can the author ensure that his paragraph maintains a flow?
- After presenting the main idea in the topic sentence, each sentence following **must build upon each other in an organized manner**. After writing the paragraph, we have to read it back to make sure the **ideas are clearly presented**. In this case, we can say that we have developed a coherent paragraph.

- Coming back to the previous example, in the second paragraph; the author mentioned in the beginning the Neglected Tropical Diseases (diseases that include several parasitic, viral, and bacterial diseases that cause substantial illness mainly for the world's poorest people), then, he focalized on parasitic infections by citing examples. Subsequently, the author was able to explain the influence of these infections on the public health.
- We can insure that the paragraph focused on one idea and the sentences in the paragraph were organized in a flow of writing.

3- A TOPIC SENTENCE

- The topic sentence is the most important part of the paragraph; it tells the reader the general idea of the paragraphs and should essentially “hook” them into wanting to read more! The topic sentence helps to provide a “general summary” for the paragraph. A reader should encounter the topic sentence and have a general idea of what the paragraph will continue to discuss.

4- A SUFFICIENT DEVELOPMENT

- After that the paragraph has a topic, it is essential that this topic be sufficiently developed. The author do not have to limit himself to a set number of sentences. Yes, the paragraph should not be too short or too long, but it should be an appropriate length to flesh out the entirety of the paragraph's idea. A reader should not be left with questions after a sufficiently development paragraph. In order to achieve this, the author can provide examples, cite work, provide necessary definitions, describe, analyze, and organize his ideas.

- Coming back to our example, in the second paragraph; if we will try to use less sentences:

The Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs), ~~which have suffered from a lack of attention by the public health community~~, include parasitic diseases such as lymphatic filariasis, onchocerciasis, and Guinea worm disease. The NTDs affect more than 1 billion people worldwide, ~~largely in rural areas of low-income countries~~. These diseases extract a large toll on endemic populations, including lost ability to attend school or work, stunting of growth in children, impairment of cognitive skills and development in young children, and the serious economic burden placed on entire countries.

- It is clear that in this case, the reader will be left with questions after reading the paragraph:
 - ✓ Why they are called **Neglected** Tropical Diseases,
 - ✓ What are the areas the most affected with NTDs.
- For this reason, the author can use as much as sentences to explain the topic sentence avoiding repetition and non related ideas

TYPES OF PARAGRAPHS

- Depending on the kind of writing, we may need to use different types of paragraphs. Here's a brief explanation of the common paragraph types most writing deals with:

- ❖ **Expository paragraphs**

- ❖ **Persuasive paragraphs**

- ❖ **Narrative paragraphs**

- ❖ **Descriptive paragraphs**

1- Expository paragraphs

- Books, journal articles, scientific reports. These informative nonfiction texts are all examples of expository writing. Expository (or informative) writing explores, shares, explains, or defines a specific subject or idea. This type of writing does not include the writer's opinion or tell a story; its goal is not to persuade, and the writer's voice should be neutral

Example:

The author gives facts about ectoparasites

Ectoparasites are a taxonomically diverse group of organisms that infest the skin of human beings and other animals. Ectoparasitic arthropods and nematodes are similar in that an individual organism can produce skin lesions that are large enough to see with the unaided eye. Ectoparasitic infestations are often intensely itchy, causing considerable annoyance and discomfort. These conditions are often focally hyperendemic in impoverished communities, with a particularly high prevalence in vulnerable families, households, and neighborhoods.

2- Persuasive paragraphs

- Persuasive paragraphs focus on discussing a single point; however, they support opinions instead of facts.
- Persuasive paragraphs usually consist of a topic sentence, body sentences, and a closing sentence. The topic sentence includes the writer's opinion, and the body sentences support that opinion. Finally, the closing sentence restates the writer's opinion.

Example:

The author gives his opinion as a conclusion of his findings

For the **foreseeable future**, salmon lice **will** continue to be a serious problem for the salmon farming industry and a threat to their environmental credibility. Salmon farmers invest in expensive sea lice monitoring and treatment programmes. **The key to a sustainable production is to integrate several management practices. This will require a substantial increase in research in areas** such as new pharmaceuticals, mechanical lice removal, vaccines and immunostimulants, selective breeding for increased resistance, effective aquaculture production and use of cleaner fish, and the development of coastal hydrographic models to estimate transmission dynamics and to support farm siting decisions and coordinated management.

3- Narrative paragraphs

- Narrative paragraphs and essays tell a story. This story is usually from an own personal experience, but it may also be an event that happened to someone else or a historical event. Narratives usually have a beginning, middle, and an end, but the story does not have to be told in chronological order.

Example:

**The author reviewed the history of
understanding the Siphonaptera Order**

In 1964 Holland (43) **reviewed** the evolution, classification, and host relationships of the Siphonaptera, and he concluded "We are now beginning to understand the natural and phyletic relationships of flea groups though many problems remain. But we are a long way from understanding the ecology and physiology of fleas, and from tracing a meaningful history of their host association." In the following pages we have concentrated on those areas not covered by Holland, especially the lesser known aspects of the order, together with a few unpublished observations. Systematics, taxonomy (including descriptions of new taxa and external morphology), parasites of fleas, medical and veterinary literature, and control by insecticides and other methods are deliberately excluded.

4- Descriptive paragraphs

- Descriptive paragraphs and essays describe someone or something. This could be a person, object, experience, or concept. Descriptive writing relies on rich detail to help the reader see and understand the topic as clearly as possible. This extensive use of detail is often described as showing instead of telling or explaining.
- A descriptive paragraph provides a vibrant experience for the reader through vivid language and descriptions of something. Unlike narrative paragraphs, which must include personal thoughts, feelings, and growth, descriptive paragraphs do not need to be personal in nature.

Example:

Sentence 1: The tree was tall and green.

Sentence 2: The soft and damp pink flowers of the dogwood tree smelled sweet in the cool spring air as the wind whistled through its yellow-green leaves.

How do these descriptions compare? If these two sentences both describe the same tree, which sentence provides a better picture for the reader? Why?

While the first description does provide some detail (that the tree is both “tall” and “green”), it does not help the reader picture the tree. Saying that the tree is “tall” and “green” does not help separate the tree being described from any other tree. The second sentence, however, provides the reader with descriptive information that makes the tree unique.