



# ENGL 100

## Paragraphs and Essays

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# Paragraphs

- What is a paragraph?
- Why do we use paragraphs in our writing?



# Paragraphs

- What is a paragraph?

Paragraphs are a group of sentences that focus on a single idea.

1. Topic Sentence: The sentence that states the paragraph's main idea.
2. Major Supports: Sentences that support the topic sentence by dividing it into two or more aspects.
3. Minor Supports: The sentences that support major supports by using examples, facts, and reasons.



## Why do we use paragraphs in our writing?

Most people are familiar with the old saying that “a picture is worth a thousand words.” If this is true, what would a picture of the earth have to say? When a camera zooms in from outer space, the first things to be visible are the lands, seas, forests, rivers and mountains. These snapshots, when compared with ones taken a thousand years ago, would reveal that the earth is not the same planet it was years and years ago. The ocean levels are rising, the polar ice caps are melting, and the currents of the oceans are changing (Stiglitz, 2007). One might wonder what caused this. Is it because of the 16,000 plastic bags thrown away every second? Is it because of the 100,000,000 mobile phones discarded in Europe each year – and because of the fact that only 2 percent of them are recycled (“Numbers,” 2007)? The answer is yes. While these factors have contributed to the damage done to this world, they are not responsible for its entirety, however. Globalization has also negatively impacted the environment. Globalization is driven by “... the promotion of consumer values that feed on the perception that happiness is rooted in material progress ...” (Rifkin, 2010). In the rush to meet consumer demands, forests are destroyed, toxic waste is dumped, and excess carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere. In other words, the environment is not as healthy as it once was due to globalization. Consequently, the debate about how to stop environmental damage caused by globalization is currently split into two camps. One side argues that the price of globalization is too high and, therefore, that it should be stopped. On the other side are its supporters, who claim that the benefits of globalization outweigh its negative impact on the earth. However, the truth is globalization can be transformed into a positive aspect rather than a negative one. Now is when governments worldwide should take steps to repair the environmental damage globalization has fostered by instituting environmental policies that incorporate educational programs, use natural resources wisely, and promote a “green” economy.



# Paragraphs

- Why do we use paragraphs in our writing?

The elements of a paragraph (the topic, topic sentence and supporting details) provide an easy-to-follow structure for expressing ideas clearly.



# Essays

- What is an essay?
- Why should I read and write an essay?



# Essays

- What is an essay?

An essay is a group of paragraphs that examine a single topic and focus on a single idea about that topic.



# Essays

- Why should I read and write an essay?
- **Reading essays** enables you to learn about a topic and discover an author's perspective, viewpoint, or approach toward the topic.
- **Writing an essay** allows you the opportunity to present your ideas on a topic and explain and support those ideas.





## Paragraphs and Essays

Both paragraphs and essays are a lot like a hamburger:  
They each have three parts.

# Parts of a Paragraph

1. Topic Sentence →

2. Major Supports →

3. Minor Supports →





## Can you identify the parts of this paragraph?

1. **Topic Sentence**
2. **Major Supports**
3. **Minor Supports**

The authors of 2016 article “Put Down That Doughnut” report that the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends people limit their sugar intake to no more than 10 percent – but ideally 5 percent – of their daily energy intake. The recommendation comes as the result of studies linking health issues with diets high in sugar. It targets sugars in processed foods, beverages and natural sweeteners, all of which make up more than 25% of most American and European diets. However, some nutritionists and the sugar industry claim that the recommendations – especially the reduction of sugars to 5% of the diet – are too drastic and based on weak research. Although both sides disagree on which amount of sugar is acceptable, they do agree that most people consume too much sugar. Nevertheless, regardless of the amount of sugar consumed, nutritionists recommend exercise.



Now, let's write a paragraph describing this room.

- 1. Topic Sentence**
- 2. Major Supports**
- 3. Minor Supports**

# Parts of an Essay

1. Introduction →

2. Body →

3. Conclusion →



# Introduction



Opening sentence (hook) – Attracts reader's attention & informs reader of general topic

Background information – Gives information related to general topic and serves as a transition to specific topic in thesis sentence

Thesis sentence – Tells reader the specific topic and organizational pattern



## Opening Sentences (Hooks)

- Quotation
- Scenario/anecdote – hypothetical or real examples illustrating the topic
- Inquiry/question – thought provoking, maybe even edgy, questions capturing the reader's attention
- Preparatory definition/explanation – definition or explanation of the subject



## Background Information

- Historical information related to hook and thesis sentence
- Biographical information related to hook and thesis sentence
- Short explanation of causes (when writing an effect essay)
- Short explanation of effects (when writing a cause essay)
- Any information that readers need to understand the essay





# Thesis Sentence

- Specific topic
- Rhetorical pattern
- Categories/Aspects



## Model Introduction

The Great Wall, known in Chinese as 长城, is included in the list of the "Seven Medieval Wonders of the World." The Wall was made a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987. The Chinese have a saying, 不到长城非好汉, roughly meaning "you're not a real man if you haven't climbed the Great Wall." But why is the Wall great? This is not an easy question to answer. However, a look at why it was built and what three major effects it has had on the Chinese people may provide an explanation.

# Body Paragraphs



Topic Sentence – Focuses on one aspect of the thesis.

Major Supports – Support the topic sentence

Minor Supports – Minor details such as examples, statistics, etc. that explain the major supports



## Model Body Paragraph

Two crucial needs led to building the Great Wall. It was initially built as a series of watchtowers to warn the Chinese when raiding Mongols were approaching. The original watchtowers stood 25 feet high and were 12 feet thick. The Great Wall's purpose later changed from warning against approaching Mongols to keeping out the invaders. The wall became a defense project with watchtowers, beacon towers, and blockhouses. One million soldiers were stationed along the 4,300 miles of wall.



## Conclusion

- Restatement of thesis
- Summary of main points
- Concluding sentence



## Can you identify the parts of this conclusion?

- **Restatement of thesis**
- **Summary of main points**
- **Concluding sentence**

In conclusion, the two reasons for constructing the Great Wall of China led to major lasting effects. Built first as a series of watchtowers to signal the advance of invaders, the wall was later expanded to keep northern nomadic tribes out of China. To pay for construction and maintenance, the emperor began taxing his subjects. However, they not only paid money, but also they paid with their lives to build the wall. Although the Great Wall has lost its military use, it still stands more than 2,000 years later as a beautiful structure to be admired by tourists.