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Writing a paragraph

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What is a paragraph?

- **A paragraph is a group of about 6-12 sentences about one topic. Every sentence in a strong paragraph is about the same topic. All of the sentences explain the writer's main idea (most important idea) about that topic. When the writer wants to write about a new main idea, he / she begins a new paragraph.**
- **A paragraph can give information, tell an opinion, explain something, or even tell a short story.**

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- **The sentences are arranged logically, so the reader can easily understand what the writer wants to say.**
- **In academic writing, a paragraph has a topic sentence that directly tells the reader the main idea. The other sentences in the paragraph, called supporting sentences, give more information about the topic. They add specific details and explanations. In academic English, the topic sentence is usually (but not always) first or last.**

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- **Getting ideas (in no particular order).**
- **Choosing (selecting the ideas you think will be most useful).**
- **Outlining (putting these ideas into the best order—making a plan).**
- **Drafting (doing a first draft from beginning to end, without going back).**
- **Revising (cutting, adding or moving parts of this draft where necessary).**
- **Editing (proofreading for grammar, spelling and paragraphs).**

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Getting ideas

- **Brainstorm**
- **Speed writing**

The good topic sentence

- **It controls or guides the whole paragraph.**
- **It is not a general fact that everyone accepts as true.**
- **It is specific.**
- **It is not too specific.**
- **It has controlling ideas.**

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Kinds of supporting sentences

- Explain
- Describe
- Give reasons.
- Give facts.
- Give examples.
- Define.

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Kinds of concluding sentences

- **Restate the main idea.**
- **Offer a suggestion, give an opinion, or make a prediction.**

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