

## Writing paragraphs

### What is a paragraph?

- a central component of a paper
  - - *“a group of sentences ... that forms a unit” (Lunsford and Connors)*
  - → length or appearance is **not** a determining factor whether a section in a paper is a paragraph,
- **it is the unity and coherence of ideas among those sentences**

### What to put in a paragraph?

- find the controlling idea in your piece of writing,
- all information in your paragraph should have a relationship to this controlling idea
- → choose information that helps to support your controlling idea

## Parts of a paragraph

- 1. Topic sentence**
  - first sentence in a paragraph, introduces the main idea
  - gives the reader a clear sense of the content
  - contains words or phrases called **controlling ideas**
- 2. Supporting details**
  - after the topic sentence
  - “body” of a paragraph → give details to develop the main idea of the paragraph (facts, examples, ... )
- 3. Closing sentence (Concluding)**
  - last sentence of a paragraph,
  - restates the main idea in different words

([http://www2.actden.com/writ\\_den/tips/paragrap](http://www2.actden.com/writ_den/tips/paragrap))

(<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wceeb/handouts/paragraphs.html>)

## Paragraph Outline Guidelines

1. Choose a topic.
2. Use pre-writing techniques (e.g. brainstorming, research) to generate ideas about the topic.
3. Organize your ideas (mindmap, outline).
4. Construct a topic sentence with controlling ideas.
5. Begin constructing the paragraph outline (**see below**).

→ Think of 2-4 points you want to make about the topic sentence.

→ For each of the points use two or more specific details that **explain, describe and/or support** that point.

6. If necessary, modify or change the topic sentence to fit the specific detail.
7. Write a concluding sentence that summarizes, offers a solution, comes to a conclusion, makes a recommendation or prediction, based on the information in the paragraph.
8. Write your first draft. Check the connectors.
9. Proofread and check your work.

(adapted from: *The Process of Paragraph Writing* Joy M. Reid)

### Paragraph writing in practice

**TOPIC SENTENCE** \_\_\_\_\_ (general)

**A. Point 1** about the topic sentence \_\_\_\_\_ (more specific)

specific detail that explains, \_\_\_\_\_  
describes, illustrates Point 1 \_\_\_\_\_ (most specific)

**B. Point 2** about the topic sentence \_\_\_\_\_

specific detail about Point 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
specific detail about Point 2 \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Point 3** about the topic sentence \_\_\_\_\_

specific detail about Point 3 \_\_\_\_\_  
specific detail about Point 3 \_\_\_\_\_

**Concluding sentence** \_\_\_\_\_ (general)

Note: For the reasons of balance:	1. never an A without a B
	2. never a 1 without a 2



## Kohäsion und Kohärenz (cohesion and coherence)

Unter **Textkohäsion** versteht man den oberflächlichen Textzusammenhang, der durch semantisch-syntaktische Mittel wie die Wiederholung von Textelementen, Substitution (Oberbegriffe, Synonyme, Metaphern, Pro-Formen), Konnektoren, Tempus und Deixis hergestellt wird.

**Textkohärenz** bezeichnet den Sinnzusammenhang eines Textes, die inhaltlich-logische und kognitive Strukturiertheit, zum Beispiel Abfolgen wie vom Allgemeinen zum Besonderen, vom Problem zur Lösung. Sie geht über den Text hinaus und ist das Ergebnis konstruktiver Prozesse beim Textrezipienten, d.h. der Rezipient stellt durch auf seinem Weltwissen basierende, sinnvolle Schlussfolgerungen einen Zusammenhang her.

Folgende Beispiele zeigen einen kohäsiven und kohärenten Text (1) und einen zwar scheinbar kohäsiven aber nicht kohärenten Text (2) (Quelle: George Yule. 1996. *The study of language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, S. 140-141):

(1)

*My father once bought a Lincoln convertible. He did it by saving every penny he could. That car would be worth a fortune nowadays. However, he sold it to help pay for my college education. Sometimes I'd rather have the convertible.*

(2)

*My father once bought a Lincoln convertible. The car driven by the police was red. That colour doesn't suit her. She consists of three letters. However, a letter isn't as fast as a telephone call.*