



Tikrit University

College of Education for Women

English Department

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## Paragraph Structure

# Paragraph Structure

## Organization

**A paragraph** : is a group of related sentences that develops one main idea, which is the topic of the paragraph.

**A paragraph has three parts**

- **Topic sentence,**

- **Supporting sentences,**

- **Concluding sentence.**

1. The topic sentence tells what topic the paragraph is going to discuss. 2. The supporting sentences give details about the topic.

3. The concluding sentence summarizes the main points or restates the topic sentence in different words.

## **A Hawaiian Wedding**

**Topic sentence** The mix of cultures in Hawaii makes weddings there very special occasions. **(supporting sentences)** Certainly, Hawaiian clothing, music, and other Hawaiian customs play a big role. For example, the bride often wears a long white holoku (wedding dress), and the groom wears a long-sleeved white shirt and pants with a red sash around his waist. Both the bride and the groom wear .The bride's lei is traditionally made of white flowers such as pikake (jasmine), and the groom's is made of green maile

leaves. Another Hawaiian custom is the blowing of a conch shell three times to begin the ceremony. Hawaiian music is played both during the ceremony and during the luau afterward. other customs included in the festivities depend on the ethnic backgrounds of the couple. Concluding sentence

All in all, a Hawaiian wedding is truly a magical, multicultural event.

**The topic sentence** is the most important sentence in a paragraph. It has two parts: **a topic** and a **controlling idea**.

**The topic** names the subject of the paragraph. In our model, the topic is **Hawaiian weddings**. **The controlling idea** tells what the paragraph will say about the topic. It is called the controlling idea because it controls or limits the topic to a very specific point or points. In our model, the controlling idea is that

weddings in Hawaii are special because of the mix of cultures.

Here are examples of topic sentences with the same topic but different controlling ideas:

Topic Controlling idea

**Some marriages** are a union of two families

**Some marriages** are a union of two individuals.

## **Position of the Topic Sentence**

1 - The topic sentence is usually the first sentence in a paragraph.

2 - A topic sentence is neither too general nor too specific. ( **Marriage is an event in a person's life**). This is **too general** because there is no specific controlling idea. The average age for people in the United States to marry in the year 2000 was 25 for a woman and 27 for a man. This is

much **too specific**. It gives details that should come later in the paragraph.

**A . Put a check (✓) next to good topic sentences. Tell what is wrong with the unchecked sentences. Are they too specific or too general? Write Too specific or Too general on the line.**

Too specific .1 It is estimated that 20 percent of Japanese marriages are arranged ✓2 . In Japan, there are two types of marriage.

good 3. Digital cameras have several advantages over film cameras. Too general 4. Digital cameras take photos.

Too specific 5. Digital photos are composed of small squares, just like a tiled kitchen floor or bathroom wall .

Too general 6. Learning the meanings of abbreviations used in the field of technology is like learning a new language.

Good 7 . PC, PDA, GPS, and Wifi are abbreviations.

Too specific 8. A PDA can perform a variety of useful functions. Too general 9. Consider these four factors when choosing a college.

Good 10. Golden retriever dogs have certain characteristics that make them good family pets

Too general 11 . I am considering event planning as a career. Good 12 . A paramedic should have three characteristics.

**Supporting sentences** : It explains the topic by giving more information about it. Supporting point sentences list the main points of the paragraph. Ex) Certainly, Hawaiian clothing, music, and other Hawaiian customs play a big role.

Other customs included in the festivities depend on the ethnic backgrounds of the couple.

**Notice/** The signal phrases that can introduce examples. At the beginning of a sentence, use **For example** or **For instance**, followed by a comma. In front of an

example that is just a word or phrase (not an entire sentence), use the prepositional phrase **such as** without a comma.

**Followed by a Comma No Comma** For example, such as

For instance,

**A concluding sentence** : signals the end of the paragraph and reminds the reader of the main idea. Here are three tips to help you write a good concluding sentence:

1. Begin with a conclusion signal. Most conclusion signals have commas after them; others do not.
  2. Remind your reader of the main idea by one of the following methods  
..
- Repeat the idea in the topic sentence in different words. Do not just copy the topic sentence.
  - Summarize the main point or points of the paragraph.
2. NEVER end a paragraph by introducing a new idea!

## Concluding Signals

**Followed by a Comma No Comma** All in all, In summary, It is clear that ... In brief, To conclude, These examples show that ... In conclusion, To summarize, You can see that ... Indeed, To sum up, In short,

**Apostrophes** The apostrophe mark (') has three main uses in English:

- To make contractions
  - To make nouns and some pronouns possessive
  - To make letters of the alphabet plural

## Contractions

An apostrophe shows where letters are missing in a contraction.

isn't is not

she's she is

## Possessives

Possessive words show **ownership**. In the phrase Maria 's book, Maria 's is a possessive noun showing that Maria is the owner of the book.

we use an **apostrophe** or an **apostrophe + s** more often when the owner is a **Jiving being**, and we use the of phrase more often when the owner is a **nonliving thing**. We prefer, for example, to say the dog 's leg but the leg of the table.