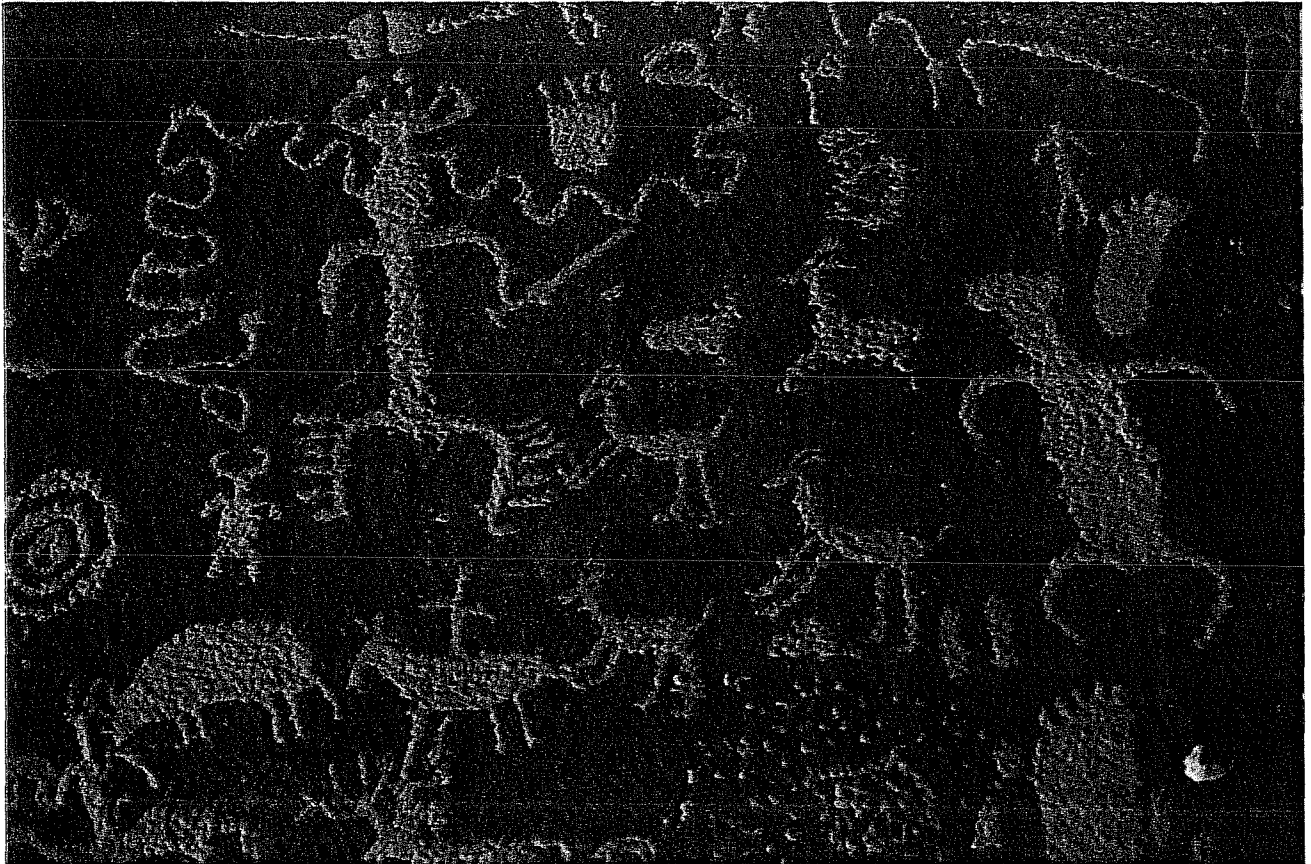


Paragraph Structure



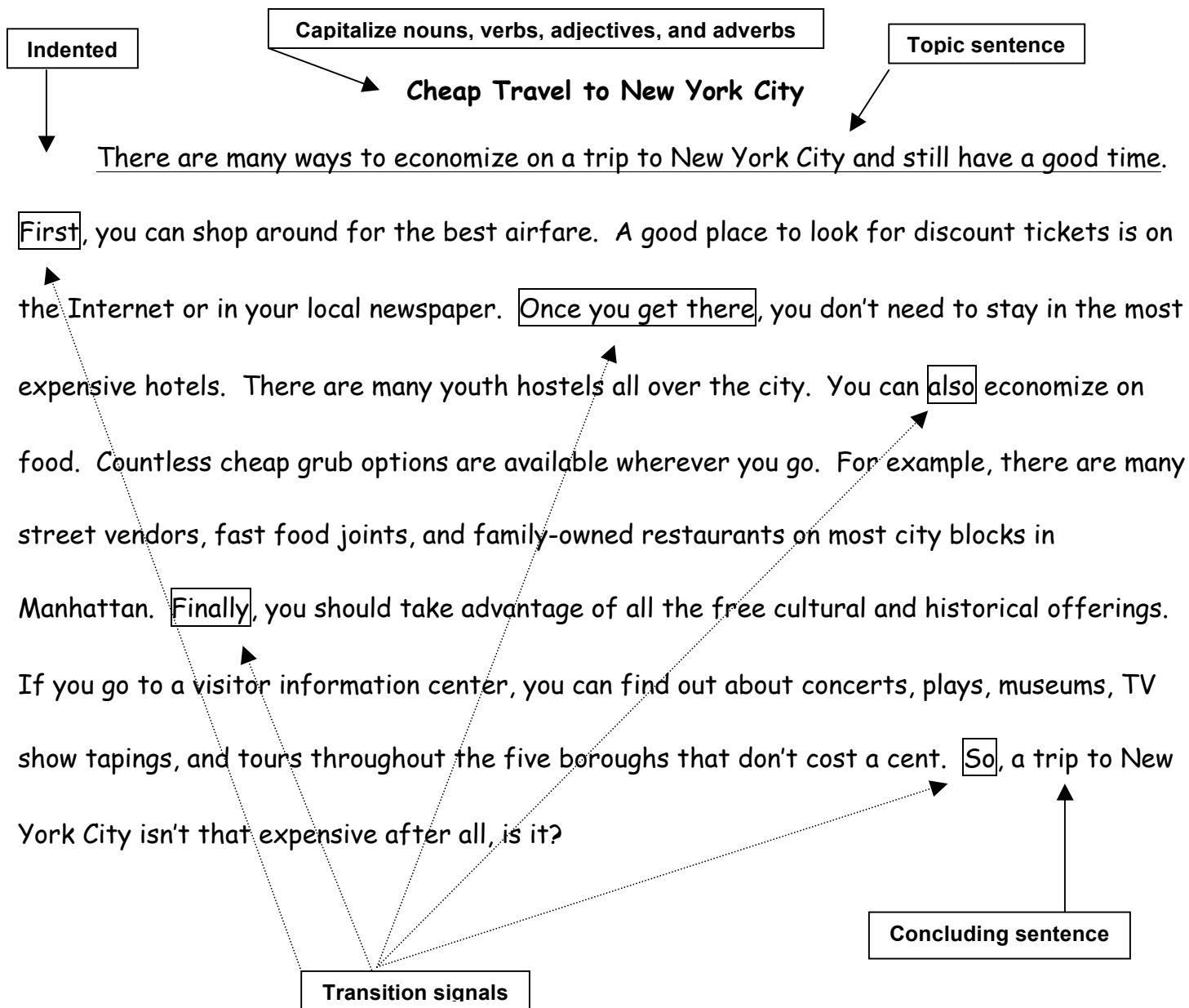
Petroglyphs in Canyonlands, Utah

A **paragraph** is a group of related sentences that discuss one (and usually only one) main idea. A paragraph can be as short as one sentence or as long as ten sentences. The number of sentences is unimportant; however, the paragraph should be long enough to develop the main idea clearly.

A paragraph may stand by itself. In academic writing, you often write a paragraph to answer a test question such as the following: “Define management by objective, and give one example of it from the reading you have done for this class.” A paragraph may also be one part of a longer piece of writing such as an essay or a book.

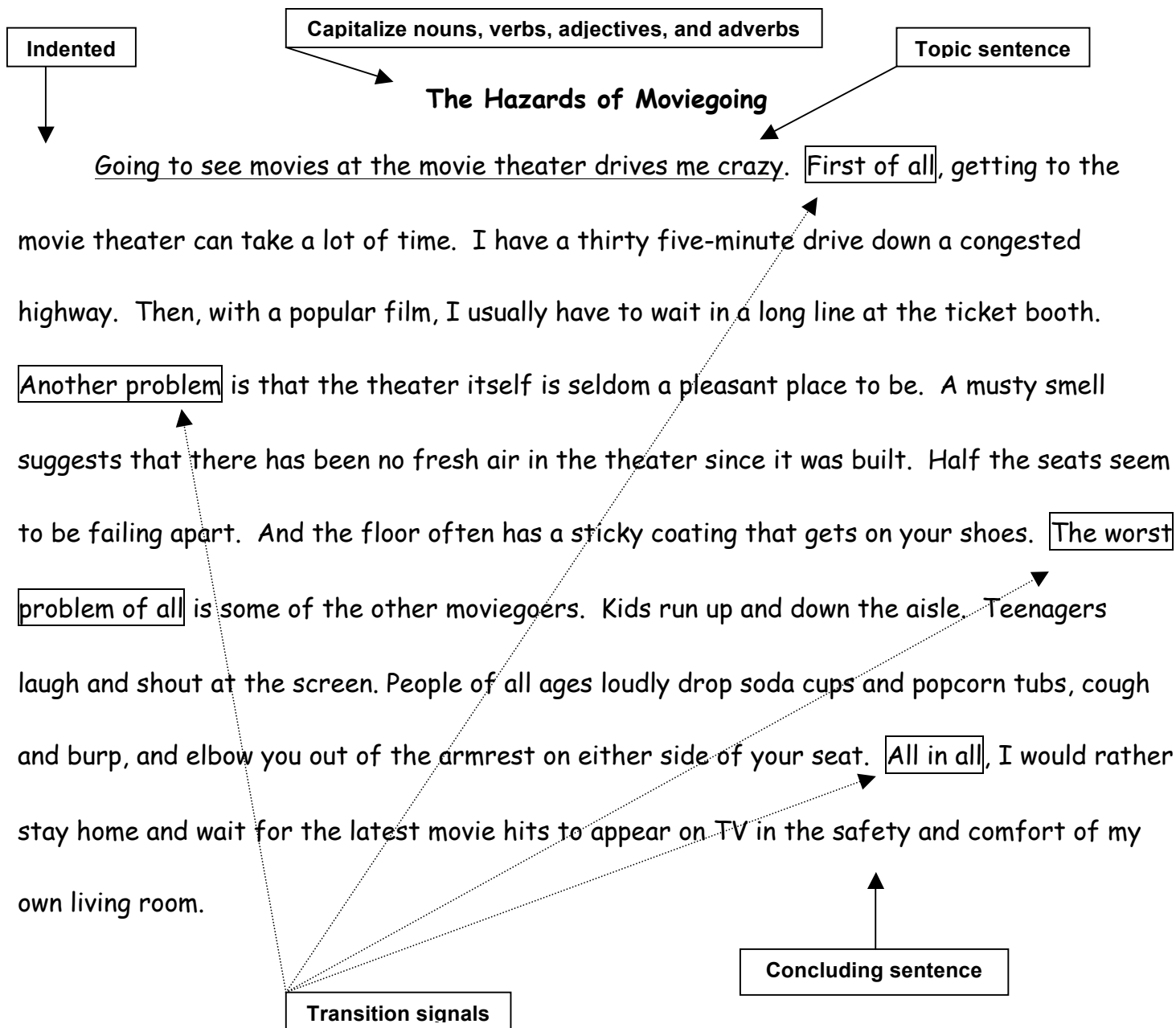
We mark a paragraph by indenting the first word about a half inch (five spaces on a typewriter or computer) from the left margin.

The following model contains all the elements of a good paragraph. Read it carefully two or three times. Then answer the Writing Technique questions that follow, which will help you analyze its structure.



Questions:

1. What is the topic sentence? What is the topic? Controlling idea (main point or opinion)?
2. How many supporting sentences are there?
3. How many minor details for each one?
4. What transition signals are used?
5. What is the concluding sentence?



Questions:

1. What is the topic sentence? What is the topic? Controlling idea (main point or opinion)?
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PRACTICE 1

Identifying Topics and Controlling Ideas

In the following sentences, circle the topic/subject, and underline the controlling idea.

Example: Swiss watches are popular because of the fine craftsmanship with which they are made.

1. Mud-slinging and personal attacks turn off some people when it comes to politics.
2. Many students dislike high school because of social cliques and favoritism for some students.
3. Families can help children by being a support system for all their activities.
4. A hobby can assist people in easing the stresses of everyday life.

5. The movie was a success because of the script, the acting, and the special effects.
6. Vacation expenses can be reduced by purchasing a good travel book.
7. The depletion of the ozone layer might cause global warming and an increase in skin cancers.
8. Many current fads are driven by how the rich and famous are portrayed in the media.
9. Helping others can make almost any profession a rewarding experience.
10. Laws are effective only if they are enforced fairly and equitably.

PRACTICE 2

Identifying Topics and Controlling Ideas

In the following sentences, circle the topic/subject, and underline the controlling idea.

1. Exercising can be more enjoyable if done in a group.
2. The fence was built to keep the coyotes away from the livestock.
3. The band played an extra hour because their fans wouldn't let them off the stage.
4. Great teamwork has made the United States' women's soccer team an international success.
5. Pizza is a best selling fast food because of the variety of toppings available.
6. Versatility and size make the laptop computer a good business tool for travelers.
7. Learning about long-term investing can help people have a happier retirement experience.
8. The Spanish Inquisition impaired scientific thought for decades.
9. Technology has as many drawbacks as it does advantages.
10. A quiet place with good lighting can help students study more effectively.

Evaluating Topic Sentences

Work with a partner. Read the following statements and put a checkmark next to the three that you think are effective topic sentences. Draw a line through the sentences that are not good topic sentences because they are either too general or too specific. Rewrite those sentences on a separate piece of paper. Discuss the improved topic sentences with your partner.

- _____ 1. My round-trip plane ticket to Ankara, Turkey, cost over \$950.
- _____ 2. The topic of this paragraph is learning new things.
- _____ 3. American music reflects the native music of many of its immigrant groups.
- _____ 4. Everyone needs a hobby.
- _____ 5. American music is the subject of this paragraph.
- _____ 6. The first published collection of African-American music, *Slave Songs of the United States*, appeared in 1867.
- _____ 7. Vacations are expensive.
- _____ 8. Russian is a difficult language to learn.
- _____ 9. Learning how to write in English can be a frustrating experience for many foreign students.
- _____ 10. The Chinese language has over 50,000 characters.

Support Your Point

After you have stated your point in the topic sentence, you need to support it with reasons, facts, and examples. As a writer, it is your job to provide enough support to prove the point you made in your topic sentence. Your supporting sentences should be as specific as possible. Supporting sentences that are vague or that merely repeat the point you made in the topic sentence are not effective.

Analyzing Paragraphs for Support

Look at the following two paragraphs. Both begin with the topic sentence *Our family trip to Costa Rica last summer was very exciting*, but only one develops it with enough specific support. Choose the paragraph that you think provides enough specific support. Underline examples of specific support.

Paragraph 1

Our family trip to Costa Rica last summer was very exciting. Every day we saw something new and different. One day we went hiking, which was really an incredible experience. Another day we took a rafting trip down a river. We saw lots of unusual plants and animals that we had never seen before. We did many things that we will never forget. Everyone agreed that this was the best trip we have ever taken.

Paragraph 2

Our family trip to Costa Rica last summer was very exciting. We were there for two weeks, and not a day went by without something unusual happening. On our second day, a boa constrictor swam right in front of us while we were rafting down the Río Claro. Another day, spider monkeys threw branches at us deep in the rain forest. Hiking on the primitive trails in Corcovado National Park, we saw brilliant scarlet macaws and toucans with huge yellow beaks. Whenever we look at the pictures from our trip, we all agree that it was the most exciting one we have ever taken.

Evaluating Support

Read the following sets of paragraphs and answer the questions. Each paragraph begins with a clear topic sentence, but only one paragraph in each set develops the main point with adequate support.

Set 1

Paragraph 1

The repairs on my car were much more expensive than I had anticipated. When I saw the final bill, I was in shock. It was twice as much as I had planned on. I had to pay \$395 to get the brakes repaired and another \$100 to get the wheels aligned. The engine oil change was \$30, and the replacement of the air filter was another \$20.

Paragraph 2

The repairs on my car were much more expensive than I had anticipated. The mechanic did a good job, but I think I was overcharged for everything. I never imagined that the final bill would be so high. In fact, I had to borrow some money from my friend to pay it. The next time my car needs repairs, I'll go to a different garage.

1. Which paragraph provides more specific support?

2. What four supporting details does the author include in that paragraph?

Set 2

Paragraph 1

My chemistry course is very difficult and time consuming. The professor doesn't seem to realize that chemistry isn't the only course we're taking. He gives lots of homework and too much reading. The worst thing is that his lectures are really boring. I'm not interested in chemistry, so I hate reading the textbook. I know I'm not the only student complaining about this course.

Paragraph 2

My chemistry course is very difficult and time consuming. First of all, we're responsible for two labs every week, which means a minimum of ten hours a week in the lab. To make matters worse, the professor gives at least three tests per month. The questions are very tricky, and we have to memorize long, complicated formulas. Finally, the reading load is also quite heavy—as much as twenty-five pages a night. I often spend all my free time doing the required reading.

1. Which paragraph provides more specific support?

2. What four supporting details does the author include in that paragraph?

Set 3

Paragraph 1

In my opinion, the effects of global warming on the environment could be disastrous. For one thing, deserts will become hotter and drier and continue to expand. Rising seas, caused in part by the melting of half the world's mountain glaciers, will flood low-lying islands and coasts, threatening millions of people. Global warming will change the climate regionally and globally, altering natural vegetation and affecting crop production. Indeed, all kinds of plants and forests, from the tropics to the Arctic tundra, will undergo radical transformation. Finally, higher temperatures could also cause more extreme storms, allowing tropical diseases to invade temperate areas.

Paragraph 2

In my opinion, a warming of the atmosphere would have serious environmental effects. Something needs to be done about this. Once it begins, the trend toward warmer temperatures could be disastrous. It would speed up the melting of ice caps and raise sea levels. An increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide of 10 percent over the past century has led some authorities to predict a long-term warming of the Earth's climate. This warming could have a severe impact on our environment and the world as we know it. In 1992, over 150 nations signed a treaty to reduce the emission of gases that intensify the greenhouse effect and result in global warming and then in 1997 met in Kyoto, Japan, to discuss it further. Since global warming would probably have a negative effect on our environment, I hope all nations take the treaty seriously.

1. Which paragraph is vague, repetitive, and lacks enough support to prove the point?

2. Which sentences in that paragraph simply restate the topic?

3. Which sentences are true but do not really support the point that global warming could have a profound effect on the environment?

Develop a Single Focus

In addition to a clear topic sentence and adequate support, a good paragraph must have a single focus. When every sentence contributes to the main idea, the paragraph has a single focus. If a sentence does not relate to the main idea, you should eliminate it.

Analyzing Paragraphs for Single Focus

- A.** Read the next two paragraphs. Notice that the first one has a single focus because all the sentences relate to the topic sentence, but the second one includes some information that does not relate to the main idea.

Paragraph 1

My apartment is in a terrible location. First of all, it is too far away from the important stores and services. It is several miles from a grocery store, bank, post office, library, or pharmacy. To make matters worse, there is no convenient public transportation in my neighborhood. The one bus line near my apartment runs only one bus an hour and has a very limited route. Almost everywhere I need to go involves changing buses and takes a lot of time. In addition, my apartment is in a high-crime area. Gangs of teenagers roam the streets, threatening the neighbors. Last month alone, eight robberies took place on our block. The elderly woman who lives next door had her purse snatched while she was walking her dog. Finally, because my apartment is near an industrial area, the pollution is awful. A nearby chemical plant causes so much smog that it is often hard for me to breathe. I agree with people who say that when you are looking for an apartment, location is everything.

All the sentences in the first paragraph support and develop the single point stated in the topic sentence: "My apartment is in a terrible location." The paragraph has a single focus.

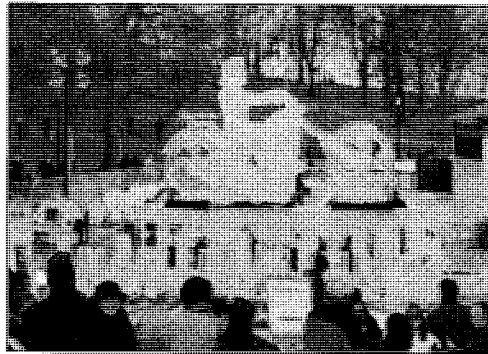
Paragraph 2

I love the location of my new house. For one thing, it's a very safe neighborhood, and I'm not afraid to go out alone. There's almost no crime, and most people don't even lock their doors. In addition, the neighborhood is in a convenient location. Lots of stores, schools, and restaurants are nearby. Within a few miles, there is also a library, health and fitness center, and movie theater. Most of all, I really like the people who live in this neighborhood. They're friendly and helpful and seem to want to keep our community safe and clean. My new house is roomy, comfortable, and sunny, but I need to buy some more furniture.

The focus of this paragraph is expressed in the first sentence: "I love the location of my new house." Most of the other sentences develop and support this sentence. But the last sentence, "My new house is roomy, comfortable, and sunny, but I need to buy some more furniture" has nothing to do with location. It is not related to the topic. It should NOT be included in this paragraph.

- B.** The topic of the following paragraph is Boston's annual New Year's Eve celebration. As you read it, decide which sentences do not belong in the paragraph because they do not support the topic sentence. Cross out the irrelevant sentences.

Every year on New Year's Eve, the city of Boston hosts a community celebration called First Night so people can celebrate the new year together. Boston was the first city in the United States to launch a special event to celebrate New Year's Eve. First Night attracts over 1.5 million people. For the \$20 cost of a First Night button, people gain general admission to many different events. Boston is the higher-education capital of the United States. The two largest universities within the city itself are Boston University and Northeastern University, and in nearby Cambridge are Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The evening begins with a grand costumed parade around the Boston Common and ends at midnight with fireworks over Boston Harbor. In between, there are more than 250 performances of international music, dance, and theater, as well as puppetry and many films to choose from. Boston is also host to the well-known Boston Marathon, which is run in April. Two hundred cities and towns in the United States, Canada, and Australia have now launched celebrations like the one in Boston for New Year's Eve.



Ice sculpture at First Night Celebration

Which sentences did you cross out? Compare the ones you deleted with those your classmates deleted.

- C.** Now read the following paragraph and underline the topic sentence. Then decide if any of the sentences are irrelevant and cross them out.

If you suffer from mental or physical stress while flying, you can take several precautions to protect yourself. First of all, you might consider taking a Fearful Flier workshop. The purpose of this workshop is to help replace the myths about flying with facts, such as what makes a plane fly and how crews are trained. There are also many interesting workshops you can take to relieve stress at work. Planning ahead is a second way to cut down on stress. Leave plenty of time for your drive to the airport and have your travel agent make an advance seat assignment for you in a part of the plane you like. Many airports have shops and restaurants where you can spend time between flights. Third, communicate your fears. If the flight crew knows that a passenger is anxious, they will make more of an effort to put you at ease. Another tip is to stay loose, both physically and mentally. Wear loose, comfortable clothing and try to relax. Flex your hands and feet. Get up and walk around. Unfortunately, the food served on many flights is unappetizing. Fifth, don't allow yourself to get bored. Bring along a good book, some magazines, or a lot of absorbing work. Another precaution you can take is to drink plenty of water and fruit juices so that you don't become dehydrated from the pressurized cabin air. Dehydration is one of the most common causes of discomfort among air travelers. Last but not least, keep your ears open by swallowing, chewing gum, or talking.

Source: *Car and Travel*

Which sentences did you cross out? Compare the ones you deleted with the ones your classmates deleted.

Writing the Concluding Sentence

A stand-alone paragraph may have a **concluding sentence** that brings it to a satisfactory close. There are several ways to write a concluding sentence.

- Restate the topic sentence in a new, refreshing way.
- Make an interesting final observation.
- End with a prediction, suggestion, or quotation.



Problems with Concluding Sentences

When you write your concluding sentence, do not introduce a contradictory idea or change the focus of the paragraph. For example, in Mahan's paragraph about crime, he should not end with a statement that questions or contradicts his main point.

- Weak:** But nobody really understands why people break the law.
(This concluding sentence undermines the main point, which is that people steal for many reasons.)
- Better:** Knowing why people steal may help social services and law makers deal with criminals more effectively.
(This prediction brings the paragraph to a satisfactory close.)

PRACTICE 8

The topic sentences in paragraphs A and B are underlined. For each paragraph, circle the letter of the most effective concluding sentence, and then explain why the other choice is not as effective.

EXAMPLE:

Picasso painted many different types of people that he saw in the Paris neighborhood of Montmartre. He painted musicians, prostitutes, street vendors, circus performers, and fellow artists, as well as his many lovers. During his blue period, he was drawn to emaciated figures; impoverished mothers and hungry children populated his art.

- Picasso painted many different types of people.
- (b) The human body was ultimately the most important and repeated image in his paintings and sculptures.

Why is the other choice not as effective?

Sentence "a" just repeats the topic sentence.

A. Our state should insist that day-care centers provide more flexible hours for families. Today, in many families, both parents work outside the home. These parents do not necessarily work from nine to five. For example, nurses and factory employees work in shifts. For such parents, flexible day care is very important. Also, many parents who are in the service and retail industry work on weekends. For these parents, it is important to have adequate child-care facilities during their work hours.

- The current opening hours of most day-care centers do not meet the needs of a great number of families.
- However, maybe day-care owners do not want to open on nights and weekends.

Why is the other choice not as effective?

B. College students should find part-time jobs that require them to exercise different muscles. If a business student spends hours sitting in front of a computer screen, then he should try to find a job that requires physical activity. If an engineering student has to do advanced calculus, then maybe her part-time job should allow her to rest her brain. Students who do a lot of solitary study could try to find jobs that allow them to interact socially.

- a. Some college students should not take part-time jobs because they need to concentrate on their studies.
- b. Humans need to do a variety of activities to be mentally and physically strong, so college students should keep that in mind when they look for work.

Why is the other choice not as effective?

PRACTICE 9

Read the next paragraph. Then answer the questions that follow.

Leonardo Da Vinci exemplified the characteristics of the Renaissance archetype. Da Vinci is most famous for being a master painter. His paintings *The Mona Lisa* and *The Last Supper* are two of the most admired in the world. Da Vinci was also an inventor, having been credited for an early model of a helicopter. He also made designs for a tank, a calculator, the double hull for ships, and a hang glider. Furthermore, Leonardo Da Vinci was a scientist. He studied anatomy by dissecting corpses, which helped him to draw human figures more precisely. He was also interested in animal and plant studies. His scientific writings are found in four journals kept in famous museums such as the Louvre and The British National Museum.

1. What is the topic of this paragraph?

2. Underline the topic sentence.

3. List the supporting details.

4. Write two possible concluding sentences for his paragraph.

a. _____

b. _____

A Career in the Sky

If you are looking for an interesting career, think about becoming a flight attendant. First of all, flight attendants receive a large amount of training for their job. They learn about interpersonal skills, customer service, and safety. Second, every time flight attendants go to work, their scenery changes. They could be in Bali one day and Hawaii the next. Sometimes they even get to stay one or two days in a city before flying home. In addition, flight attendants get bargain prices on airline tickets for vacation. Imagine spending no more than ten dollars for any flight in the United States! Finally, flight attendants get to meet a wide variety of people from all over the world. For a truly exciting career, consider becoming a flight attendant because the benefits are worth it.

Applying to an American University

Although the process for applying to an American university is not complicated, it is important to follow each step. The first step is to choose several schools that you are interested in attending. Next, write to these schools to ask for information, catalogues, and applications. You may also want to visit the schools' websites. After you have researched several schools, narrow your list to three to five. Then mail all the required forms and documents only to your final list of three to five schools. If the school of your choice requires you to take a standardized test such as the SAT, ACT or TOEFL, be sure to do so early. In addition, ask various school officials and teachers to write letters of recommendation for you if the university requires them. Finally, almost all schools have an application fee. This should be sent in the form of a check or money order. One last piece of advice is to start early because thousands of high school students are all applying at the same time.

Changing a Tire on Your Car

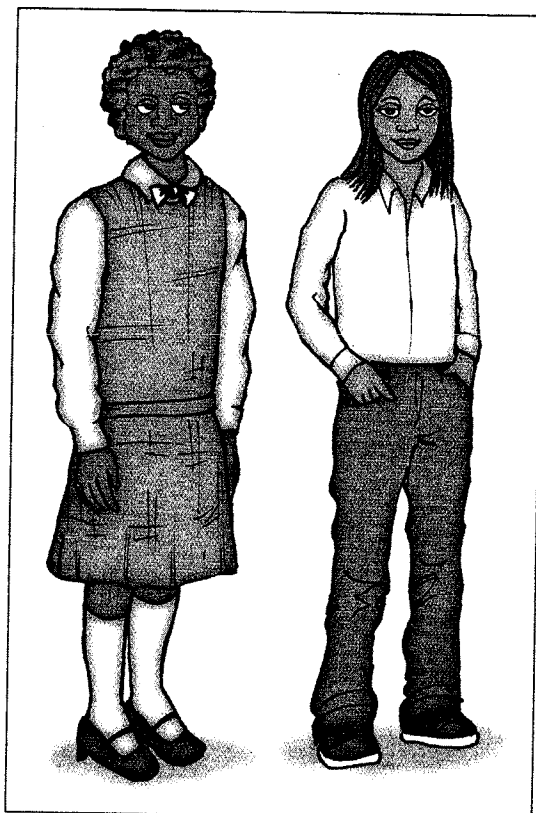
There are many steps in changing a tire on your car. Before you get started, make sure you have the following items: a jack, a lug nut wrench, and a spare tire. First, use the jack to elevate the car off the ground. This may require some strength because cars can be very heavy. Using the lug nut wrench, remove all of the lug nuts from the tire. This will probably be the most difficult step because some of the lug nuts may be “frozen.” After you have taken off the lug nuts, remove the flat tire and replace it with your spare tire. Screw the lug nuts back onto the new tire, and check to see that they are tightly fastened. Finally, lower the car back down to the ground. Check one last time to make sure that the nuts are as tight as possible. Following these steps will have you back on the road in no time.

Dying with Dignity

The U.S. government should support the legal use of “medicide,” which happens when people with terminal diseases choose to end their lives rather than continue living. One reason the government should do this is because people should not be forced to continue living if they are in severe pain and cannot live with it. A second reason is that staying in the hospital for a long time often causes a financial burden on the family. Terminally ill people often worry about the hardship that this will cause their families. Finally, people who are dying sometimes lose hope. Even if they are alive, they can often only lie in bed, and for some people, this is not “life.” In the end, while many people believe that medicide is an “unnatural way to die,” and should remain illegal, the government should allow sick people the legal right to end their lives if they want.

An A+ for School Uniforms

School uniforms should be mandatory for all students in the United States for a number of reasons. First, they make everyone equal. In this way, the “rich” kids are on the same level as the poor ones. In addition, getting ready for school can be much faster and easier. Many kids waste time choosing what to wear to school, and they are often unhappy with their final choices. Most important, some studies show that school uniforms make students perform better. Many people might say that uniforms take away from personal freedom, but I believe the benefits are stronger than the drawbacks.



(1) Choose one of the following topics.

- | | | | |
|------------|-----------|--------------|-----------------|
| ◆ Travel | ◆ Food | ◆ Future | ◆ Dating |
| ◆ Music | ◆ Family | ◆ Television | ◆ Culture |
| ◆ School | ◆ Friends | ◆ Books | ◆ Current event |
| ◆ Religion | ◆ Health | ◆ Shopping | ◆ Internet |
| ◆ Sports | ◆ Pets | ◆ Games | ◆ Other: _____ |

(2) Specify your topic.

Travel

Europe

Study abroad trip to London

My fantastic study abroad trip to London in 2005

Music

Singers

Prince

Prince is the greatest living musician

_____ (general topic)

_____ (specified topic)

_____ (even more specified topic)

_____ (add a modifier)

(3) Brainstorm, mind map or freewrite some ideas in the box. Select and discard when finished.

Brainstorming

When you **brainstorm**, you create a list of ideas. You can include opinions, details, images, questions, or anything else that comes to mind. If you need to, you can stop and think while you are creating your list. Do not worry about grammar or spelling. Remember that the point is to generate ideas.

MADHURI'S BRAINSTORMING

College student Madhuri Desai brainstormed about the topic “families.” Her audience was her instructor and other students, and her purpose was to inform.

- types of families
- reasons families are smaller
- relationship between siblings
- birth order
- mistakes parents make
- raising confident children
- problems with blended families
- the importance of family
- large versus small families
- family reunions
- family vacations

Freewriting

When you **freewrite**, you write without stopping for a limited period of time. You record whatever thoughts come into your mind without worrying about them. Even if you run out of ideas, you can just repeat a word or phrase, or you can write “I don’t know what to say.”

During freewriting, do not be concerned with your grammar or spelling. If you use a computer, let your ideas flow and do not worry about typing mistakes. Remember that the point is to generate ideas and not to create a perfect sample of writing.

MANUEL'S FREEWRITING

College student Manuel Figuera jotted down some of his thoughts about fears. He wrote for five minutes without stopping.

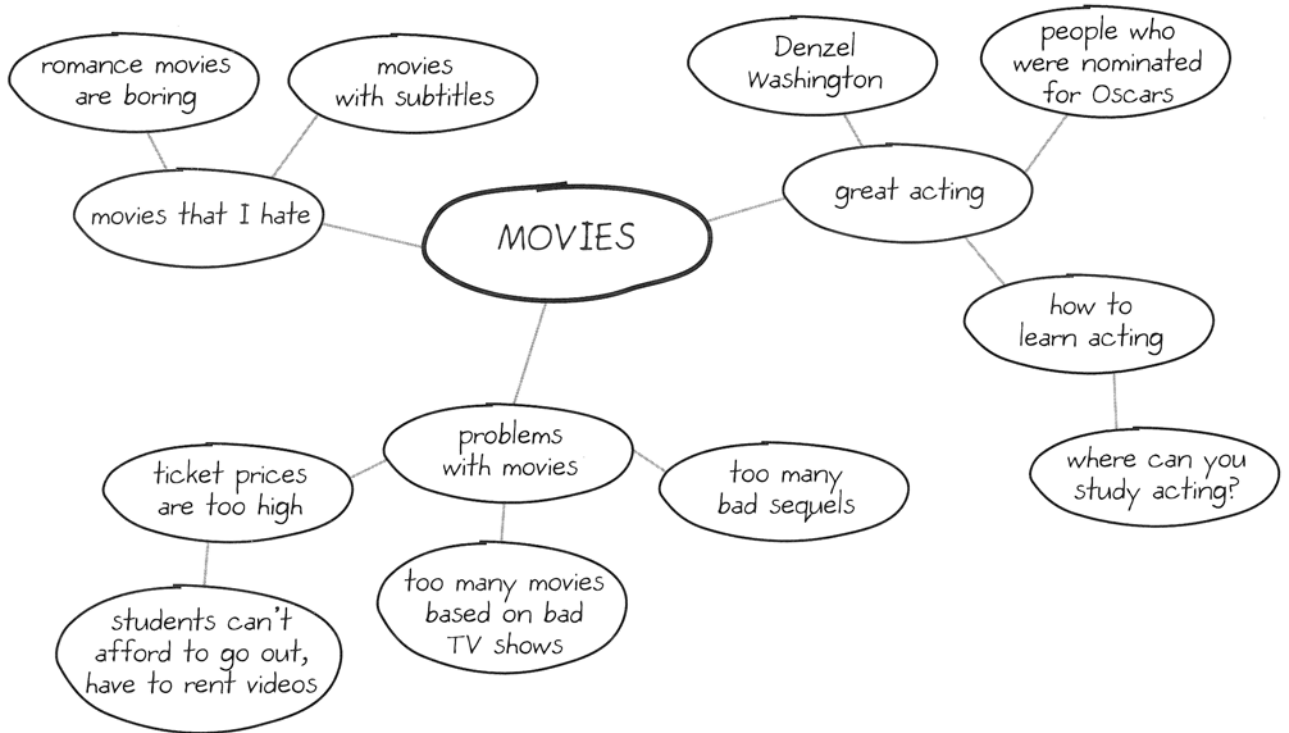
What do I think about fears? I don't know. I'm not afraid of anything. No, that's not true. I had a lot of fears when I was a kid. I was sure a monster lived under the bed. I would check under the bed every night and when I got out of bed I'd jump a few feet so the monster couldn't grab my leg. What else? Think, think, think. . . . Probably everybody is afraid of something. My sister hates spiders and other bugs. I guess I still have some fears. I don't like to speak in public. I get nervous when I have to read out loud too. There are ways to get over fears, though. I learned some techniques about public speaking.

Clustering

When you **cluster**, you draw a word map. To begin, write your topic in the middle of the page. Then, think of ideas that relate to the topic. Using lines or arrows, connect each idea to the central topic or to other ideas. Keep writing, circling, and connecting ideas until you have groups or “clusters” of them on your page. When you finish, you will have a visual image of your ideas.

ANTON'S CLUSTERING

College student Anton Gromyko used clustering to explore ideas about movies.



(4) Outline (3-4 things you want to say about your topic).

(5) Write a topic sentence [topic + controlling idea].

- ⊙ *Our school library is the worst place to study.*
- ⊙ *The first day on a new job can be nerve-wracking.*
- ⊙ *Pets can be more trouble than children.*

(6) Write a paragraph plan (3-4 supporting points and 1-2 minor details for each one).

Supporting sentence 1 _____

Minor detail 1 _____

Minor detail 2 _____

Supporting sentence 2 _____

Minor detail 1 _____

Minor detail 2 _____

Supporting sentence 3 _____

Minor detail 1 _____

Minor detail 2 _____

Supporting sentence 4 _____

Minor detail 1 _____

Minor detail 2 _____

(7) Write a concluding sentence.

What Is Revising and Editing?

After you have written the first draft of your paragraph, the next step in the writing process is to revise and edit your work. When you **revise**, you modify your writing to make it stronger and more convincing. You do this by reading your first draft critically, looking for faulty logic, poor organization, or poor sentence style. Then you reorganize and rewrite it, making any necessary changes. When you **edit**, you proofread your final draft for errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and mechanics.

There are five key steps to follow during the revising and editing stage.

REVISING AND EDITING

-
- STEP 1** **Revise for unity.** Ensure that all parts of your work relate to the main idea.
-
- STEP 2** **Revise for adequate support.** Determine that your details effectively support the main idea.
-

STEP 3 **Revise for coherence.** Verify that your ideas flow smoothly and logically.

STEP 4 **Revise for style.** Ensure that your sentences are varied and interesting.

STEP 5 **Edit for technical errors.** Proofread your work and correct errors in grammar, spelling, mechanics, and punctuation.

ESSAY LINK

When revising and editing your essay, check that the body paragraphs support the thesis statement. Also, ensure that each body paragraph has unity.

Revise for Unity

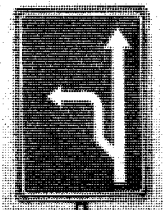


Every idea in a paragraph should move in the same direction just as this bridge goes straight ahead. There should be no forks in the road.

Unity means that all of the sentences in a paragraph support the topic sentence. If a paragraph lacks unity, then some sentences drift from the main idea that a writer has expressed in the topic sentence. To check for unity, ensure that every sentence in the body of the paragraph relates to one main idea.

Paragraph Without Unity

In the next paragraph, the writer drifted away from her main idea. Some sentences do not relate to the topic sentence. If the highlighted sentences are removed, then the paragraph has unity.



The writer took a detour here.

During World War II, the status of women changed profoundly. The military industry needed “manpower” to fight the war, but it also needed womanpower. From 1940 to 1944, about 17 million women joined the work force. They filled jobs in defense industries, steel mills, shipyards, and aircraft factories. By the end of the war, women had proved that they could be invaluable workers. Today, many women work in these industries, and it isn’t considered unusual. In fact, according to Brigid O’Farrell, women represent over 17 percent of all blue-collar workers in the United States. Now women earn the same salary as men in most jobs. When men returned home in 1945, most women left the factories; however, women developed confidence and earning power, and North America’s workplace changed forever.

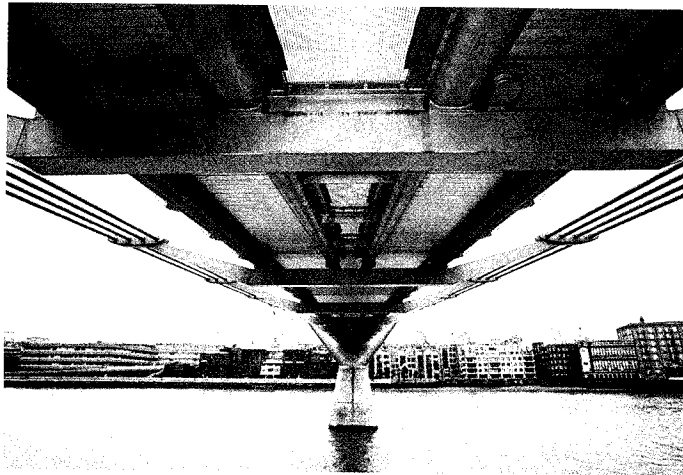
PRACTICE I

Paragraphs A and B contain problems with unity. In each paragraph, underline the topic sentence and cross out any sentences that do not support the controlling idea.

A. Car-based cell phones should be banned. One study published by the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that the risk of a collision quadruples if drivers use a cellular phone. The findings indicate that the major problem with cell phones is that they affect the driver's concentration. Jeffrey Blain repairs roads, and he says that sometimes drivers using their phones go through barriers and into road repair sites because they are so distracted. I also hate it when people use their cell phones in movie theaters. At a recent movie, I heard the beeps of various cell phones at least five times during the film. The problem is especially bad in cars, though. Our government should outlaw cell phones in motor vehicles.

B. Orville and Wilbur Wright had an unlikely dream, but they turned it into reality. When the brothers first tried to make a plane fly, they were unsuccessful. In fact, in 1901, a frustrated Wilbur Wright said that humans wouldn't fly for a thousand years. However, just two years later, on December 17, 1903, Wilbur and Orville Wright flew a plane for 105 feet. The brothers were overjoyed; their hard work and planning had finally paid off. Since that time, air travel has changed a lot. Many different types of planes exist today. Jets fly across our skies and can go from London to New York in a few hours. Eventually the Wright brothers produced nineteen types of aircraft. By sticking with an idea and persevering, the Wright brothers made their dream a reality.

Revise for Adequate Support



A bridge is built using several well-placed support columns. Like a bridge, a paragraph requires adequate support to help it stand on its own.

A paragraph has **adequate support** when there are enough details and examples to make it strong, convincing, and interesting. The following paragraph attempts to persuade, but it does not have any specific details that make a strong point.

ESSAY LINK

When revising your essay, ensure that you have adequately supported the thesis statement. Also ensure that each body paragraph has sufficient supporting details.

Paragraph Without Adequate Support

In European films, the star can be wrinkled or overweight. Unfortunately, American filmmakers have not figured out that people like to see reflections of themselves on screen. To get a job, American movie actors must be in perfect shape and have perfect bodies. It is often hard to believe that the beautiful actor is really the waiter or car mechanic that is pictured on screen. The problem is especially acute when the star is older. You can be sure that he or she has had a lot of surgery to look as young as possible. Ordinary audience members have trouble identifying with surgically enhanced actors. Perhaps one day American producers will use regular-looking people in their films.

PRACTICE 2

When the preceding paragraph about film stars is expanded with specific details and examples, the paragraph becomes more convincing. Try adding details on the lines provided. You can do this alone or with a partner.

In European films, the star can be wrinkled or overweight. Unfortunately, American filmmakers have not figured out that people like to see reflections of themselves on screen. To get a job, American movie actors must be in perfect shape and have perfect bodies. For example, _____ and _____ are incredibly good-looking. It is often hard to believe that the beautiful actor is really the waiter or car mechanic that is pictured on screen. In the movie titled _____, the actor _____ looks too perfect to be a _____. The problem is especially acute when the star is older. You can be sure that he or she has had a lot of surgery to look as young as possible. For instance, _____ looks much younger than the actor's real age. Ordinary audience members have trouble identifying with surgically enhanced actors. Perhaps one day American producers will use regular-looking people in their films.

Avoiding Circular Reasoning

Circular reasoning means that a paragraph restates its main point in various ways but does not provide supporting details. The main idea goes in circles and never progresses. Avoid using circular reasoning by providing a clear, concise topic sentence and by supporting the topic sentence with facts, examples, statistics, or anecdotes.

CELIA'S PARAGRAPH

Celia Raines, a student, wrote the following paragraph about a popular proverb. In the paragraph, she repeats her main point over and over and does not provide any evidence to support her topic sentence.

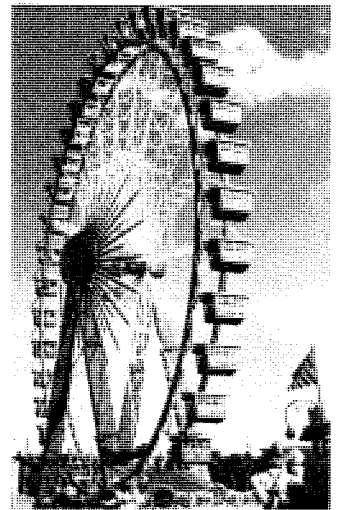
Circular

Those who make the most noise usually get what they want. People sometimes shout and make a fuss and then others listen to them. Those who are quiet get ignored and their opinions do not get heard. It is important for people to speak up and express their needs. This attitude is expressed in the proverb, "The squeaky wheel gets the grease."

In the second version of this paragraph, Celia added a specific example (an anecdote) that helped illustrate her main point.

Revised Paragraph

Those who make the most noise usually get what they want. Those who are quiet get ignored, and their opinions do not get heard. For example, two years ago, the local government started a passenger train service that helped local commuters get into the city. Many citizens loved commuting by train, but those who live near the train tracks complained about the noise. They made petitions, wrote to newspapers, and lobbied the local government to cancel the train service. Those people were so loud and persistent that they got their wish, and the train service was canceled. The silent majority disagreed with that lobby group, but as the proverb says, "The squeaky wheel gets the grease."



Circular reasoning in a paragraph is like a Ferris wheel. The main idea of the paragraph does not seem to progress.

PRACTICE 3

Paragraphs A and B use circular reasoning. There is no specific evidence to support the topic sentence. List supporting examples for each paragraph. With numbers, indicate where you would place the supporting examples.

EXAMPLE:

American teenagers go through several rites of passage. These rites of passage help the teenager navigate the transition from childhood to adulthood. Some rites of passage are shared with the community.

These rites are an important part of every youth's life.

Examples: (1) *The first date and the first kiss are important.*

The first job is also a special step.

(2) *During the high school prom, the community*

members gathered together.

A. Police officers have an important function in our society. They provide many useful and necessary services in the community. If there were no police officers, there would be anarchy in the streets. Law-enforcement officers deserve our respect and appreciation.

Examples: _____

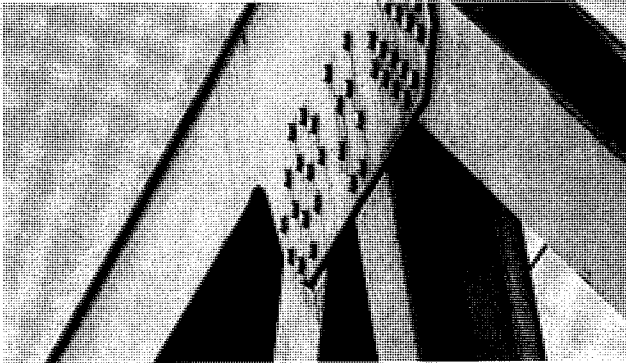
B. When you move out of your family home and live on your own, you should plan your budget carefully. There are many things that you will have to pay for, and a lot of items will be expensive. You will need to pay for services. Even small household items add up. It is expensive to live on your own.

Examples: _____

ESSAY LINK
To create coherence in an essay, you can place transitional expressions at the beginning of each body paragraph.

Revise for Coherence

When you drive along a highway and you suddenly hit a pothole, it is an uncomfortable experience. Readers experience similar discomfort if they encounter potholes in a piece of writing. Make your writing as smooth as possible by ensuring that it has **coherence**: the sentences should flow smoothly and logically.



Just as bolts link pieces of a bridge, transitional expressions can link ideas in a paragraph.

Transitional Expressions

Transitional expressions are linking words or phrases, and they ensure that ideas are connected smoothly. Here are some common transitional expressions.

Function	Transitional Word or Expression	
Addition	again also besides finally first (second, third) for one thing furthermore	in addition in fact last moreover next then
Concession of a point	certainly even so indeed	of course no doubt to be sure
Comparison and contrast	as well equally even so however in contrast instead	likewise nevertheless on the contrary on the other hand similarly
Effect or result	accordingly as a result consequently hence	otherwise then therefore thus
Example	for example for instance in other words	in particular namely specifically to illustrate
Emphasis	above all clearly first especially in fact in particular indeed	least of all most important most of all of course particularly principally
Reason or purpose	for this purpose for this reason	the most important reason
Space	above behind below beneath beside beyond closer in farther out inside	near nearby on one side/on the other side on the bottom on the left/right on top outside to the north/east/south/west under
Summary or conclusion	in conclusion in other words in short generally on the whole	therefore thus to conclude to summarize ultimately
Time	after that at that time at the moment currently earlier eventually first (second, etc.) gradually immediately in the beginning in the future in the past	later meanwhile months after now one day presently so far subsequently suddenly then these days

GRAMMAR LINK

For more practice using transitions in sentences, see Chapter 17, "Compound Sentences," and Chapter 18, "Complex Sentences."



Use Transitional Expressions with Complete Sentences

When you add a transitional expression to a sentence, ensure that your sentence is complete. Your sentence must have a subject and a verb, and it must express a complete thought.

Incomplete: For example, the rules posted on the wall.

Complete: For example, the rules were posted on the wall.

PRACTICE 4

The next paragraph contains eight transitional expressions that appear at the beginning of sentences. Underline each expression, and then, in the chart, indicate its purpose. The first one has been done for you.

For those who love eating out, a new type of dining experience is rearing its ugly head. Indeed, service with a sneer is popping up in Canada and the United States. For instance, in the New York City teahouse Tea and Sympathy, customers must follow a rigid list of rules. Those who plan to wait for friends are sharply told to leave. Moreover, patrons who manage to get a table are kicked out as soon as they finish their tea. Similarly, in Vancouver, the Elbow Room Café posts rules on the wall, including one that asks customers to get their own coffee and water. Also, the owner and staff members ridicule customers who order decaf tea or butter-free toast. Even so, clients keep coming back, comparing the experience to going to a show. The bad service trend has always been there. However, people in previous decades would have left such eateries without leaving a tip. These days, customers line up to be abused.

Transitional Expression	Function
1. <u>Indeed</u>	<u>Emphasis</u>
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____
8. _____	_____

PRACTICE 5

Add appropriate transitional expressions to the following paragraph. Choose from the following list, and use each transitional word once. There may be more than one correct answer for each blank.

- | | | |
|--------------|-------------|-------------------|
| consequently | furthermore | on the other hand |
| for example | first | therefore |

Workplace gossip has both positive and negative effects. _____, when two colleagues share secrets about others, it helps build trust and creates intimacy. _____, in large organizations, gossip helps form small social groups that provide workplace support systems. _____, overly negative gossip can undermine employee moral. An employee who hears malicious gossip may suspect that he or she is also the subject of office chatter. _____, Latisha Bishop, an employee at CR Industries, says that she felt devastated when she realized that her coworkers were spreading information about her private life. _____, she seriously considered leaving her job. _____, when office workers gossip, they should try to do so without malice.

Revise for Style

When you revise for sentence **style**, you ensure that your paragraph has concise and appropriate language and sentence variety. You can ask yourself the following questions.

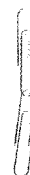
- Have I used a **variety of sentence patterns**? (To practice using sentence variety, see Chapter 19.)
- Have I used **exact language**? (To learn about slang, wordiness, and overused expressions, see Chapter 31.)
- Are my sentences **parallel in structure**? (To practice revising for parallel structure, see Chapter 21.)

MAHAN'S REVISION

On pages 37–38 in Chapter 2, you read the first draft of student Mahan Zahir's paragraph about crime. Look at his revisions for unity, support, coherence, and style.

First, poverty

People steal for many reasons. ~~Poverty~~ is a primary motivation for people to steal. Because some people are unemployed and others may be underemployed. They may not have enough money for food, clothing



ESSAY LINK

You should revise your essays for style, ensuring that sentences are varied and parallel. Also, ensure that your language is exact.

← Transition

rent. Stealing money or food may be very tempting. As a means of survival. ~~Some~~ *Next, some* criminals ~~do~~ *perpetrate* fraud because they are greedy. In fact, some extremely wealthy people steal simply because they want to acquire a larger yacht or a faster jet. *For example, the directors of Enron and WorldCom were found guilty of stealing from shareholders, none of these directors lacked personal wealth. According to Lisa Bloom, a reporter for court tv, the rich steal for the same reason as the poor: they love getting something for nothing.* Another important reason that people engage in stealing is due to addiction to drugs or alcohol. Addicts steal to buy drugs and overuse of alcohol may lead to poor judgment. *According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 68 percent of jailed inmates reported that their substance abuse problems contributed to there decisions to commit crimes.* In addition, people steal for kicks. *Martin Jeffs, a twenty three year old mugger who spoke to BBC News, say that excitement is a major motivation for many street criminals: "It gives a lot of people a buzz to know that they have got the power to overpower someone and take his possessions."*

Criminals get an adrenaline rush when they outwit the ~~oops~~ *police*. *Knowing the different reasons that people steal may help social workers and lawmakers deal with criminals more effectively.*

Transition ➤
Better word ➤

Add specific examples ➤

Add indirect quotation ➤

Add statistic ➤

Add quotation ➤

Better word ➤

Add concluding sentence ➤



Adding Strong Support

When you revise, look at the strength of your supporting details. Ask yourself the following questions.

- Are my supporting details interesting, and do they grab the reader's attention? Should I use more vivid words?
- Is my concluding sentence appealing? Could I end the paragraph in a more interesting way?

PRACTICE 6

In Chapters 1 and 2, you saw examples of Sandra Ahumada's prewriting and planning. Now look at the first draft of Sandra's paragraph, and revise it for unity, support, and coherence. Also, ask yourself what you could do to enhance her writing style.

Customers should always tip restaurant servers. Servers need tips to live. Their salary is very low. They depend on tips to pay for food, housing, and other necessities. They do not get benefits such as health care. If you do not like the service, remember that mistakes are not always the server's fault. Poor service could be the cook's fault. Sometimes there are not enough servers. I work as a server in a restaurant, I know how hard it is when customers leave bad tips. Always tip your restaurant server.

Edit for Errors

When you **edit**, you reread your writing and make sure that it is free of errors. You focus on the language, and you look for mistakes in grammar, punctuation, mechanics, and spelling.

There is an editing guide at the back of this book. It contains some common error codes that your teacher may use. It also provides you with a list of things to check for when you proofread your text.

Editing Tips

The following tips will help you proofread your work more effectively.

- Put your writing aside for a day or two before you do the editing. Sometimes, when you have been working closely with a text, you might not see the errors.
- Begin your proofreading at any stage of the writing process. For example, if you are not sure of the spelling of a word while writing the first draft, you could either highlight the word for later verification or immediately look up the word in the dictionary.
- Keep a list of your common errors in a separate grammar log. When you finish a writing assignment, consult your error list, and make sure that you have not repeated any of those errors. After each assignment has been corrected, you can add new errors to your list. For more information about grammar and spelling logs, see Appendix 7.



GRAMMAR LINK

For more editing practice, see Chapter 36.



TECHNOLOGY LINK

Word processors have spelling and grammar checkers. Do not always choose the first suggestion for a correction. Make sure that suggestions are valid before you accept them.

MAHAN'S EDITED PARAGRAPH

Mahan Zahir edited his paragraph about crime. He corrected errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar.

People steal for many reasons. First, poverty is a primary motivation for people to steal. Because some people are unemployed and others may be underemployed, ^{they} they may not have enough money for food, clothing ^{and} rent. Stealing money or food may be very tempting ^{as} as a means of survival. Next, some criminals perpetrate fraud because they are greedy. In fact, some ^{extremely} extremely wealthy people steal simply because they want to acquire a larger yacht or a faster jet. For example, the directors of Enron and WorldCom were found guilty of stealing from shareholders, ^N none of these directors lacked personal wealth. According to Lisa Bloom, a reporter for ^{Court TV} court tv, the rich steal for the same reason as the poor: they love getting something for nothing. Another important reason that people engage in stealing is due to addiction to drugs or alcohol. Addicts steal to buy drugs and overuse of alcohol may lead to poor judgment. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 68 percent of jailed inmates reported that their substance abuse problems contributed to ^{their} their decisions to commit crimes. In addition, people steal for kicks. Martin Jeffs, a ^{twenty-three-year-} twenty-three-year-old mugger who spoke to BBC News, ^{says} says that excitement is a major motivation for many street criminals: "It gives a lot of people a buzz to know that they have got the power to overpower someone and take his possessions." Criminals get an adrenaline rush when they

outwit the police. Knowing the different reasons that people steal may help social workers and lawmakers deal with criminals more effectively.

***The Writer's Desk* Revise and Edit**

Choose a paragraph you wrote for Chapter 2, or choose one that you have written for another assignment. Carefully revise and edit the paragraph. You can refer to the Revising and Editing Checklist at the end of this chapter.

Peer Feedback

After you write a paragraph or essay, it is useful to get peer feedback. Ask another person such as a friend, family member, or fellow student to read your work and give you comments and suggestions on its strengths and weaknesses.

Hint

Offer Constructive Criticism

When you peer-edit someone else's writing, try to make your comments useful. Phrase your comments in a positive way. Look at these examples.

Instead of saying . . .

Your sentences are boring.
Your supporting ideas are weak.

You could say . . .

Maybe you could combine some sentences.
You could add more details here.

You can use the following peer feedback form to evaluate written work.

Peer Feedback Form

Written by: _____ Feedback by: _____

Date: _____

1. What is the main point of the written work?

2. What details effectively support the topic sentence?

3. What, if anything, is unclear or unnecessary?

4. Give some suggestions about how the work could be improved.

5. What is an interesting or unique feature of this written work?

Write the Final Draft

When you have finished making revisions on the first draft of your paragraph, write the final draft. Include all of the changes that you have made during the revision and editing phases. Before you hand in your final draft, proofread it one last time to ensure that you have caught any errors.

(9) Peer review - Revise: Exchange your paper with a partner. Put a “✓” in the left (Yes) or right (Not yet) column.

	Yes	Not yet	
1.	_____	_____	Is there a clear topic sentence (topic and controlling idea)?
2.	_____	_____	Do all of the sentences support the topic sentence?
3.	_____	_____	Is there enough information to support the topic (specific facts, details, and examples)?
4.	_____	_____	Is there a single focus (every sentence contributes to the main idea)?
5.	_____	_____	Are the sentences arranged in logical order (so that it makes sense)?
6.	_____	_____	Are there transition words (first, next, finally) to guide the reader from one idea to the next?

**If the answer to any of the questions is “not yet,” go back and try to improve your paragraph.*

(10) Peer review - Edit: Now put a “✓” in the left (No) or right (Yes) column.

	No	Yes	
1.	_____	_____	Incorrect or missing article (The martial artists bowed to each other to show <u>the</u> respect.)
2.	_____	_____	Preposition errors (<u>On</u> March, we will go to Hawaii.)
3.	_____	_____	Subject-verb agreement errors (Students <u>s</u> at the university level <u>is</u> very busy.)
4.	_____	_____	Verb tense errors (Yesterday, I <u>cash</u> the refund check and bought a laptop.)
5.	_____	_____	Irregular verb errors (Lee <u>cutted</u> fabric for the vests.)
6.	_____	_____	Wrong forms after verbs (The pilot wanted <u>landing</u> in Dallas.)
7.	_____	_____	Wrong order of adjectives (I just bought a <u>yellow new</u> Mini Cooper. *See order below.)
8.	_____	_____	Split infinitive errors (. . . <u>to boldly go</u> where no one has gone before.)
9.	_____	_____	Wrong word choices (they're/their/there, you're/your, it's/its, two/too/to, then/than, etc.)
10.	_____	_____	Count or non-count noun errors (We have ordered new office <u>equipments</u> .)
11.	_____	_____	Plural possessive errors (*plural: the brothers' bike/singular: my brother's bike)
12.	_____	_____	Repeated subjects (My English professor <u>she</u> is very smart.)
13.	_____	_____	Too many sentences starting with the same word (I went to the store. I bought some bananas. I...)
14.	_____	_____	Short, choppy sentences
15.	_____	_____	Long, awkward, or wordy sentences (Suzie believed, but could not confirm, that Bill had feelings of affection for her. > Suzie assumed Bill liked her.)
16.	_____	_____	Mixed construction (Since I have a lot of work to do <u>is</u> why I can't go out tonight.)

17. _____ Lacking parallel construction (He spoke softly, precisely, and with authority.)
18. _____ Fragments (Because they were their first./For example, running, swimming, and playing tennis.)
19. _____ Run-ons (They weren't dangerous criminals they were detectives in disguise.)
20. _____ Pronoun agreement errors (Every taxpayer must bring their notice to the hearing.)
21. _____ Dangling modifiers (After rotting in the cellar for weeks, my brother brought up some oranges.)
22. _____ Misplaced modifiers (I fixed the frame of my bicycle that was hit by a car in the basement last night.)
23. _____ Comma splice errors (He goes to Colorado to ski, I go there to paint.)
24. _____ Spelling errors (*Use a software spellchecker – e.g. Microsoft Word)
25. _____ Punctuation errors (*Check apostrophes, quotation marks, colons, semi-colons, parentheses, brackets, dashes, hyphens, ellipses, slashes, question marks, exclamation points, and periods.)
26. _____ Capitalization errors (*Capitalize the first word in every sentence, the first word in direct quotations, the first word and content words of titles, and all proper nouns)

**If the answer to any of the questions is "yes," go back and try to improve your paragraph.*

Order of adjectives

1. **Article or other noun signal word** (*a, an, the, most*)
2. **Judgment** (*wonderful, unfair, useful, ugly*)
3. **Size** (*large, tiny, little*)
4. **Shape** (*round, long, bell-shaped*)
5. **Age** (*old, teenaged, modern*)
6. **Color** (*green, yellow, black*)
7. **Nationality** (*Vietnamese, Dominican, Russian*)
8. **Material** (*stone, wood, cotton*)

(9) Revise and edit your paragraph (using the criteria above).

