

Writing

2nd year

As you already know from your first year course, when you are writing an essay, the body of the paper is organised into coherent paragraphs each of which usually expresses one idea.

This year our main focus will be on the use of topic sentences, supporting sentences as well as concluding sentences.

TOPIC SENTENCE

The topic sentence is the most important sentence of a paragraph. It states the main idea and introduces the reader to the topic.

EXERCISE 1

Choose the best topic for each group of supporting sentences. Write it on the provided line.

1. _____ . First of all, we need money to repair old roads and build new roads. We also need more to pay teachers' salaries and to pay for services such as trash collection. Finally, more tax money is needed to give financial help to the poor citizens of the city. It is clear that the city will have serious problems if taxes are not raised soon.

- a) We should raise city taxes
- b) City taxes are too high
- c) City taxes pay for new roads

2. _____ . For example, a person can have breakfast in New York, board an airplane, and have dinner in Paris. A businesswoman in London can instantly place an order with a factory in Hong Kong by sending a fax. Furthermore, a schoolboy in Tokyo can turn on a TV and watch a baseball game being played in Los Angeles.

- a) Airplanes have changed our lives
- b) Advances in technology have made the world seem smaller
- c) The fax machine was an important invention

3. _____ . One thing you must consider is the quality of the university's educational program. You also need to think about school's size and location. Finally, you must be sure to consider the university's tuition to make sure you can afford to go to school there.

- a) It is expensive to attend a university in the United States
- b) There are several factors to consider when you choose a university to attend
- c) You should consider getting a good education

EXERCISE 2

Write a topic sentence for each paragraph. Make sure your topic sentence expresses the main idea of the paragraph.

1. _____ . I can't wait to come home from school and eat the delicious meals she has prepared. She is famous for her desserts like peach pie and chocolate soufflé. She is always experimenting with new recipes and trying different ingredients. No one in the world can cook the way my mother does.

2. _____ . It never starts in cold weather. The horn and the left turn signal don't work properly. Worst of all, the radio only gets one station and the CD player is completely broken. I wish I could get a new car.

3. _____ . To start things off, my plane was six hours late. When I finally got to my hotel, I was very disappointed. It was small and dirty. On the third day, my wallet was stolen, and I lost all my credit cards. It rained every day except one, and on that day I got a terrible sunburn. All in all, it wasn't a vacation to remember.

SUPPORTING SENTENCES

The supporting sentences develop the main idea in the topic sentence. They add details to the topic and help you to develop your ideas: give details, examples, move from general abstract ideas to specific qualifications of an idea.

EXERCISE 3

Read the following paragraphs and underline the supporting sentences.

There are many reasons I hate my apartment. The plumbing doesn't work properly and the landlord refuses to fix it. I also have noisy neighbours who keep me up all night. Furthermore, there are so many bugs in my apartment that I could start an insect collection. I really want to move.

IRREVELANT SENTENCES

Every supporting sentence in a paragraph must relate to the main idea stated in the topic sentence. A sentence that does not support the main idea does not belong in the paragraph, thus such a sentence should be omitted. When a sentence does not belong in a paragraph, it is called an **irrelevant sentence**.

Example: The students in the class come from many different parts of the world. Some are from European countries such as France, Spain, and Italy. Others are from Middle Eastern countries like Saudi Arabia and Israel. Still other students were born in Asian countries, including Japan and Korea. **Korean food is delicious.** The largest number of

students is from Latin American countries like Mexico, Venezuela and Peru. The class is an interesting mix of people from many different countries.

EXAMPLE 4:

There is one irrelevant sentence in each paragraph that follows. Find that sentence and cross it out.

1. There are several ways people can conserve natural resources. One way is to turn lights off and appliances when they are not in use. Another way is to drive cars less. My favourite kind of car is a convertible. People can also insulate their houses better. Finally, by reusing things like bottles and plastic bags, people can reduce the amount of waste. By practising these simple guidelines, we can save our natural resources.

2. The capital city of a country is usually a very important city. The government offices are located in the capital city and political leaders usually live there nearby. There are many different types of governments in the world. The capital may also be the centre of culture. There are often museums, libraries, and universities in the capital. Finally, the capital city can serve as a centre of trade, industry and commerce, so it is often the financial centre of the country.

3. Cats make wonderful house pets. They are very loving and friendly. Cats are also clean. They don't eat much, so they are not expensive. Unfortunately, some people are allergic to their hair. Cats look beautiful and they're fun to have in your home.

CONCLUDING SENTENCES

Some paragraphs end with a concluding sentence. This sentence states the main idea of the paragraph again using different words. It summarizes the main points of the paragraph, or makes a final comment on the topic. Concluding sentences are not always necessary. In fact, short paragraphs that are part of longer pieces of writing often do not have concluding sentences.

EXERCISE 5

Write a concluding sentence for each paragraph.

1. There are many reasons why I like wearing a uniform to school. First of all, it saves time. I don't have to spend time picking out my clothes every morning. Wearing a uniform also saves money. It's cheaper to purchase a new uniform than to go out and buy lots of school clothes. In addition, I don't have the pressure of keeping up latest styles. Most importantly, wearing a uniform gives me a sense that I belong. I really think that it adds to the feeling of school spirit and community. (concluding sentence)

2. Credit cards have a lot of advantages. First of all, credit cards are convenient because you don't have to carry a lot of cash around. You can buy the products and services you need even if you do not have cash in your pocket. In addition, credit cards are very helpful in emergencies. Finally, you can become a better money manager as you learn to use credit cards responsibly. (concluding sentence)

STUDY SKILLS

CORRECTING YOUR WRITING

Which of these sentences are true for you ?

- I always check my writing carefully when I've finished.



- I read my teacher's comments, and corrections carefully.



- When my teacher gives back my work, the only thing I look at is my mark.



- I look at my mistakes, but never remember them.



- After my teacher gives back my work, I often rewrite it to make it better.



When you have finished writing a text you should read it again several times to correct it and improve it. It's not an easy task to spot your own mistakes! You will improve that skill dramatically if you are systematic. The following exercise is a good starting point.

EXERCISE 6

Read the following text at least three times.

1st reading : Correct the punctuation.

2nd reading : Correct the spelling and the vocabulary.

3rd reading : Correct the verbs : subject/verb agreement, tenses, irregular verbs, etc.

4th reading : Correct relative pronouns, prepositions, word order.

In my country family life is very important, we spend a lot of time, with poor families, and we always have lunch together on sundays, there are also a lot of family businesses.

Ont problem in my contry is that rich peoples is getting richer poor people is getting poorer, if the gap among them will beome very big, it will create problems serious. Violence will increase we will frightened to leave our homes. What we can do I beleive that rich people should pay more tax and the govenment must provide more ocasions for poor people.

LINKING WORDS

Narrating / organizing ideas	
first (of all)	tout d'abord
in the first place	premièrement
to begin with	pour commencer
second(ly)	deuxième(ment)
then / next	ensuite
third(ly)	troisième(ment)
lastly/finally	enfin, pour finir
in the end	à la fin
eventually	finalement
last but not least	enfin et surtout
Expressing the message of the text and of the author	
this text deals with	ce texte traite de
he demonstrates that	il démontre que
he intimates that	il laisse entendre que
according to him	d'après lui
as he says	comme il le dit
this suggests that	ceci donne à penser que / cela suggère
issue / central issue / key issue	question, problème/ question clé
Expressing opinion	
in my mind / in my opinion	d'après moi, à mon avis
as for me	en ce qui me concerne
I don't mean that	je ne veux pas dire que
I'd like to point out that	je voudrais faire remarquer que
what I find shocking here is	ce qui me choque ici c'est
I can't understand why	je n'arrive pas à comprendre pourquoi
I doubt whether	je doute que
I'm not really convinced	je ne suis pas totalement convaincu que
I approve of / I disapprove of	j'approuve / je désapprouve
I think so / I don't think so	je pense / je ne pense pas
I don't share such views	je ne partage pas de telles idées
I'm strongly opposed to	je suis fortement opposé à
I definitely disagree	je ne suis pas du tout d'accord
I fully agree with him	je suis tout à fait d'accord
he gives an accurate analysis	il a fait une analyse très juste de
He's got a point here	là il a raison
Moderating comments	
to a certain extent/to some degree	jusqu'à un certain point
we could also say that	on pourrait dire aussi que
one should not forget that	il ne faut pas oublier que
we must weigh the pros and cons	il faut peser le pour et le contre
Adding	
besides/moreover/what is more/ furthermore/ in addition to that	de plus

likewise /similarly	de même
Contrasting	
however/yet	cependant
nevertheless	néanmoins
all the same	tout de même
on the other hand	d'autre part
in spite of / despite	malgré
though / although	bien que
on the contrary	au contraire
by contrast	par contraste
Expressing consequence	
therefore	par conséquent
as a result	par conséquent
so	ainsi, donc
Giving examples	
for instance	par exemple
for example	par exemple
such as /namely	tel que
Clarifying an idea	
that is to say	c'est-à-dire
what I mean is that	ce que je veux dire c'est que
in other words	en d'autres termes
Digressing	
by the way	au fait
that reminds me of	cela me fait penser à
Summarizing what has been said	
to sum up	pour résumer
in brief	en bref
in short	en un mot
Concluding	
in conclusion	en conclusion