

# The Paragraph

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*The Paragraph*

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# Theme 1 : The Paragraph: Definition, Format, and Organisation

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## 1. Introduction



**Définition**

According to *Bailey (2003)*, a paragraph is a group of sentences that are related to one topic. The required topic determines the content of the paragraph be it details, explanations, definitions, descriptions, or arguments.



**Fondamental**

An effective paragraph contains a number of elements including:

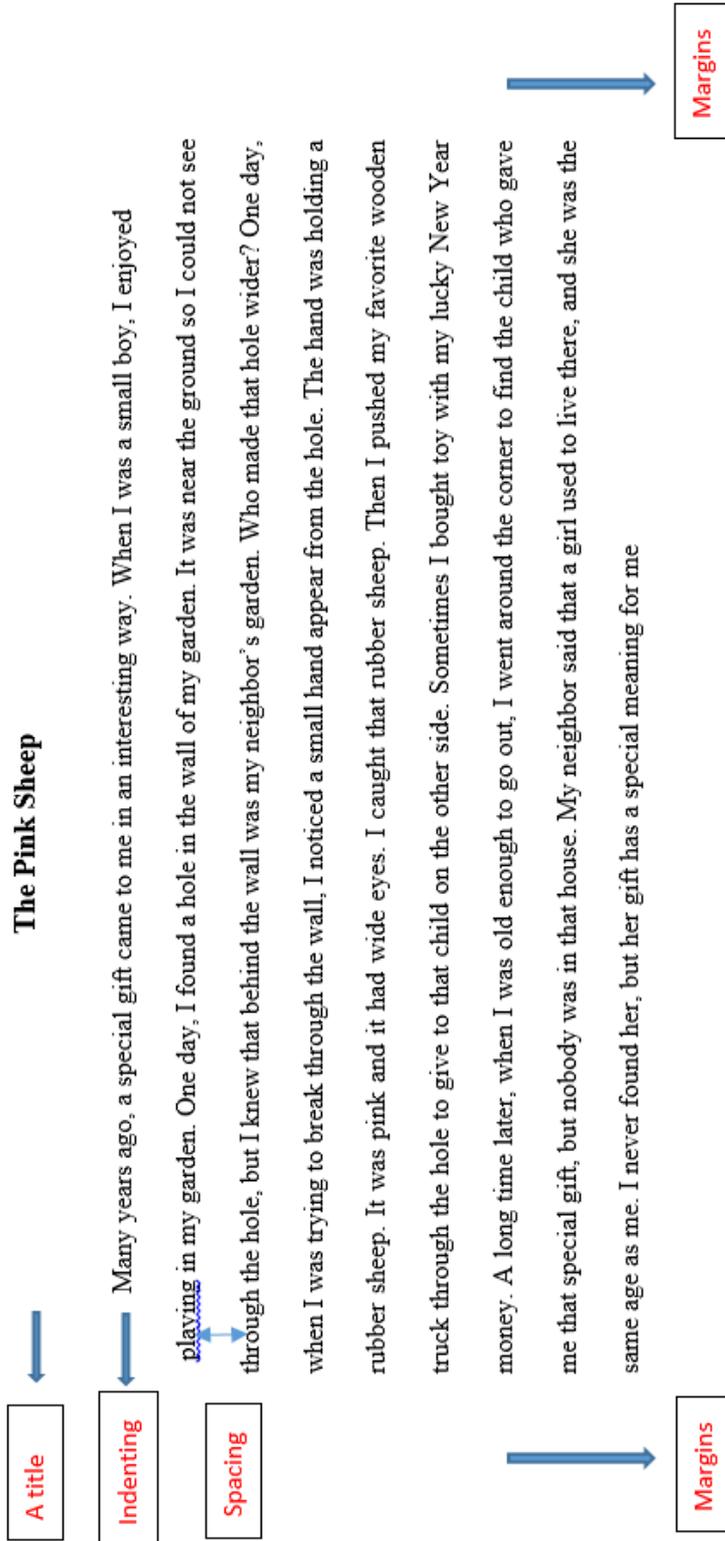
- a format
- an organization

## 2. Format

A paragraph is structured as follows:

- it has a title
- it has an indented first sentence
- it is double-spaced
- it includes margins
- it is six to eight sentences long

Example of the format of a paragraph



Format of a paragraph.

## 3. Organisation

### 3.1. The Topic Sentence

A paragraph is divided into three parts. The first part is called the the topic sentence.

- The topic sentence comes **often, but not always**, at the beginning of the paragraph and gives an idea about what the paragraph deals with. It is composed of **a topic** and a **controlling idea**. The latter tells the reader what to expect in the following sentences.
- A topic sentence must not be too simple, too specific, or too general; otherwise, it will be unclear. It must say something about the topic that can then be developed, demonstrated, and supported in the upcoming sentences.

**?** *Example*

- A surprise party is a king of party (too general)
  - There were 14 guests at my surprise birthday party (too specific)
  - My classmates gave me an unforgettable surprise party for my 18th birthday (it is effective)
- [cf. Topic sentence]

### 3.2. The Supporting Sentences

The second part of a paragraph is called the supporting sentences. They:

- represent a **continuation** and further insights on the topic sentence.
- can include **definitions, explanations, details, and examples**.
- answer the following questions: **Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?**

**?** *Example*

Topic sentence: My classmates gave me an unforgettable surprise party for my 18th birthday.

Supporting sentences:

- They decorated the classroom with pictures of my favourite movie hero.
- They invited all my family members and friends.
- They prepared a delicious cake.

[cf. Supporting sentences]

### 3.3. The Concluding Sentence

The last part of the paragraph is called the concluding sentence. It **summarizes** what has been said earlier in the paragraph by:

- reminding the reader of the topic and the controlling idea of the paragraph.
- warning the reader (if you do not follow these steps, you will not get what you need).
- making a prediction (this concept will change as soon as people will do this).
- giving an opinion about the topic (some people might disagree, but I think that this is the best).

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Topic sentence: My classmates gave me an unforgettable surprise party for my 18th birthday.

Concluding sentence: I will never forget what my classmates did for me on my 18th birthday.

[cf. Concluding sentence]