## The Paragraph

Dr. GHOUALI Kamila

**Tlemcen University** 

Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages

Department of English

Email: ghoualikamila@gmail.com

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



### 1. Introduction



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.



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

A title

## Example of the format of a paragraph Margins when I was trying to break through the wall, I noticed a small hand appear from the hole. The hand was holding a money. A long time later, when I was old enough to go out, I went around the corner to find the child who gave playing in my garden. One day, I found a hole in the wall of my garden. It was near the ground so I could not see rubber sheep. It was pink and it had wide eyes. I caught that rubber sheep. Then I pushed my favorite wooden me that special gift, but nobody was in that house. My neighbor said that a girl used to live there, and she was the truck through the hole to give to that child on the other side. Sometimes I bought toy with my lucky New Year through the hole, but I knew that behind the wall was my neighbor's garden. Who made that hole wider? One day, Many years ago, a special gift came to me in an interesting way. When I was a small boy, I enjoyed same age as me. I never found her, but her gift has a special meaning for me The Pink Sheep Indenting Spacing Margins

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.



- 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?



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).



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]