

The Paragraph

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



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:

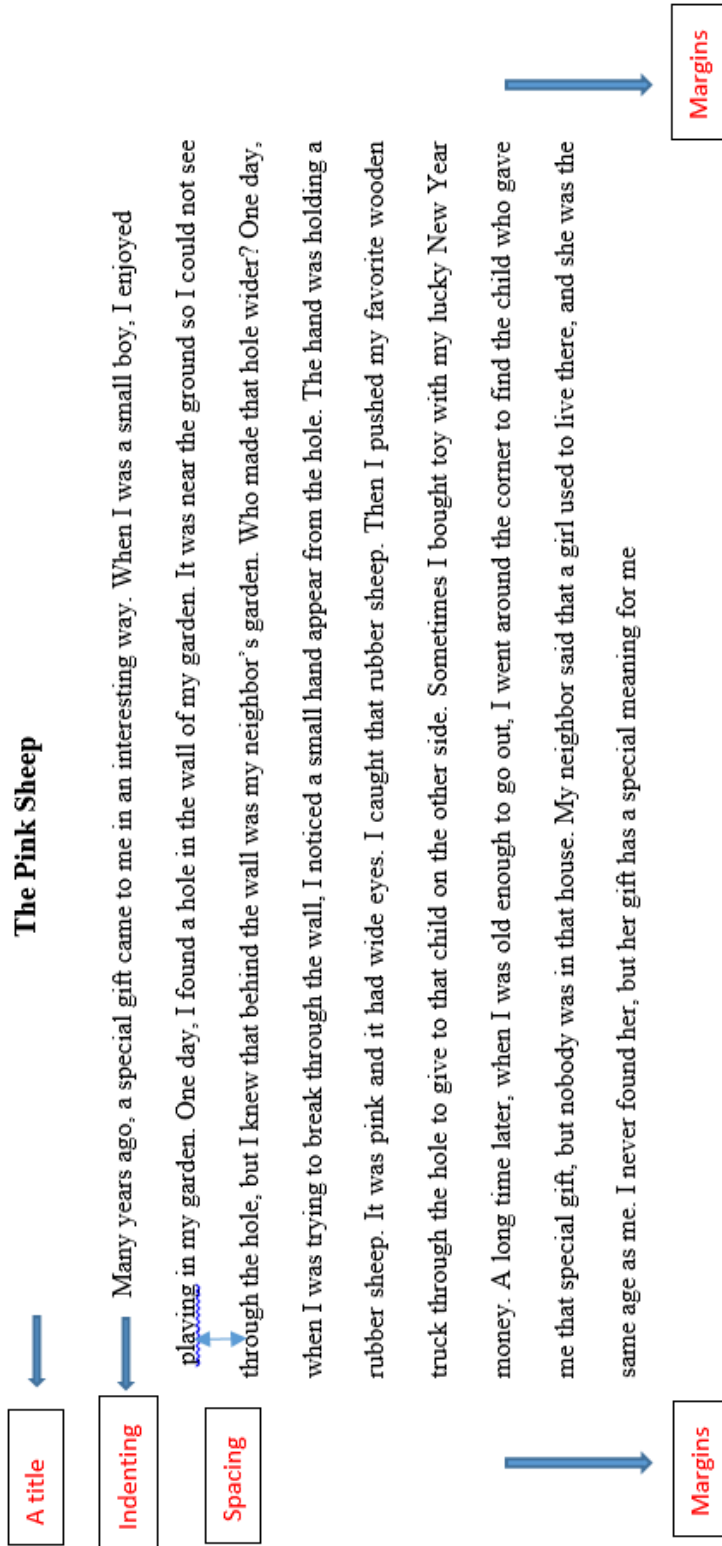
- a format
- an organization

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).

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]