

The Paragraph

A paragraph is a group of sentences which work together to present a single, unified idea.

1. Choose a topic.
2. Ask questions about the topic.
Who, what, when, where, why, and how?
3. Determine a Controlling Idea (your point, purpose, focus)
4. Start with a Topic Sentence (your topic + controlling idea)
5. Write a unified, coherent, and adequately developed paragraph.
6. Make each sentence in the paragraph contribute to the controlling idea.
7. Link the sentences in the paragraph so that the thought flows smoothly from one sentence to the next.
8. Arrange the sentences in a clear, logical order. (General to Specific, Specific to General, Chronological, or Spatial)
9. Link sentences by repeating key words or ideas from the preceding sentences.
10. Link sentences by using such transitional expressions as however, but, therefore, furthermore, then, and to sum up.
11. Link sentences by using parallel structure – that is, repeating a sentence pattern.
12. Develop ideas adequately so that each paragraph presents enough information about the controlling idea to satisfy the reader – use details, closely related examples.
13. Remember RENNS (Reasons, Examples, Names, Numbers, and Senses) – See *Simon & Schuster Handbook for Writers*, p. 83.
14. End your paragraph with a concluding sentence.