



12 Paragraph Construction



The Paragraph

A **Paragraph** is made up of a group of sentences with a common topic.

The **Topic Sentence** is the first sentence of a paragraph. It states or suggests the main idea of the paragraph.

A paragraph must have **unity** and **coherence**. When a paragraph has unity, all its sentences relate to a single idea. Coherence refers to the logical sequence in which the sentences are arranged in a paragraph.

Exercise A

In each group of sentences below, place the number 1 beside the topic sentence. Place the numbers 2,3, and 4 to indicate the order in which the next sentences should appear to make a coherent paragraph.

- A. Michael is also a very unselfish player; he is always setting up other players to score goals. _____
- Without Michael on our team, we would not be in first place in the league. _____
- Michael is the best hockey player on the team. _____
- He has scored more goals than any of his team-mates this season. _____

- B. When the holiday is over, we are always sad to leave. _____
- Every year, we rent a cottage on Georgian Bay for the month of July. _____
- Our cottage is equipped with a boat for water-skiing and a large dock for swimming. _____
- Georgian Bay is less than a three-hour drive from our home in Toronto. _____

- C. His cousins were very bright and learned basic English very quickly. _____
- Enzo's cousins from Italy arrived to spend the summer in Canada. _____
- When their holiday was over, they could express themselves very well. _____
- They did not speak a word of English so Enzo began to teach them some everyday expressions. _____

Exercise B

Write a topic sentence for each short paragraph below. Make sure that your topic sentence introduces the main idea of the sentences in the paragraph.

1. Topic sentence: _____

We boarded the bus at 8:00 a.m. because the trip was going to take two hours. When we arrived at the ski hills, we rushed into the chalet to get our equipment. Within half an hour, we were zooming down the ski hills.



2. Topic sentence: _____

We drove to the airport three hours before the scheduled time of our departure. Once we got checked in, we had to find a way to spend the next two hours. My parents went to the bookstore while I played a few video games. Finally, we got the call to board, and suddenly I became very excited.



3. Topic sentence: _____

All the students sat waiting for the teacher to draw the name of the winner. He shuffled the tickets once, twice, and then he finally reached into the hat and pulled out a name. First he stated that the winner was a girl; then he indicated which row of seats she sat in. We were waiting in anticipation when he finally made the announcement.



4. Topic sentence: _____

We decided to make a special birthday card instead of buying one. My brother is a very good artist so he drew the pictures. My job was to write the message. When we gave our mother the card, she was delighted.

