

## Qualities of a Good Paragraph

Once have established a focused introduction with a three point thesis, it is time for you to write the developmental paragraphs of your essay. This is where you should spend the most time, perhaps spending 75-80% of the time you take for your writing. In order to write strong, connected developmental paragraphs, you must be able to understand three things: qualities of a good paragraph, a good topic sentence, and common transition markers in a paragraph.

Have you ever talked to someone who couldn't stay on topic? Maybe when you were talking to him, he changed the subject many times during a short period. To illustrate this point, read the following conversational exchange:

John: How are you today?

Susan: I am Okay. I think I am going fishing.

John: Really? I love fishing.

Susan: Then I am going to go back to the house to read.

John: What kind of books do you like?

Susan: I read when I get bored. So did you talk to Mom this afternoon?

John: Yes.

Susan: Well, I think I am going to go fishing now. See you later.

From this conversation, you can probably guess that John will become frustrated since Susan keeps changing the topic so much that John doesn't really have a meaningful conversational exchange. The topic in this conversation should have been fishing.

Writing is also an interactive conversational exchange—it occurs between the writer and the reader. It is important to stay on topic, so the reader can follow your way of thinking. So, what are the qualities of a good paragraph?

- ↪ A paragraph should be unified around a main point. The main point should be clear to the reader.
- ↪ Generally, state the main point of a paragraph in the topic sentence. The topic is usually found in the first line of the paragraph.
- ↪ The remaining sentences in the paragraph must relate to the topic sentence.

Read the following two paragraphs, the first one representing a well-organized paragraph, the second one representing a disorganized paragraph:

### Good paragraph:

First, the Internet has practically removed all barriers to communication that existed before the introduction of E-mail. You no longer have to rely on postal departments to send important documents. Services such as chatting allow you to correspond online with a person. Internet also provides facilities such as NetMeeting and Video conferencing where you can actually conduct a meeting or a conference with people in different parts of the world.

- ↪ The paragraph is unified around a main point (i.e., Internet has removed barriers).
- ↪ The main point is stated in the beginning.
- ↪ The rest of the sentences support that main point.

### Disorganized paragraph:

Nowadays, a lot of people work in virtual teams. The members can live far away from each other or not know each other. But they work together. They belong to the same group. The efficiency of virtual teams is remarkable, which we can see in high tech industry. Because of Internet, virtual teams occur. This is a significant stage of business field. Internet is medium that I can connect with my family and friends even though all of us are live in different countries. I can use Internet to not only connect with the people whom I want to attach but also to do meaningful research . Internet makes people easily to find information that they want.

- ↪ The paragraph is not unified around a main point (i.e., virtual teams, medium to connect with family, do meaningful research: these are three separate topics which should be discussed in separate paragraphs).
- ↪ The main point is not stated in the beginning (i.e., the main point appears to be “because of Internet, virtual teams occur.”)
- ↪ The rest of the sentences do not support the main point.