

## What makes a great paragraph?

- Forceful topic sentence that directly addresses the topic
- All ideas are relevant and directly support the topic sentence
- Logical sequence of ideas; effective concluding sentence
- Sentences are controlled and varied in structure
- Word choice is appropriate and precise: few mechanical errors

## A Good Paragraph Structure – See Tanya’s Paragraph Outline!

A paragraph should contain some structure and particular elements, which are listed below in relative order:

1. **A Topic sentence**- motivates the reader to want to read more.
2. **The First main point**- proves, backs up, or explains the topic sentence.
3. **The Second main point**- usually provides a reason for the first point made.
4. **The Third main point**- can help prove the topic sentence or back up the first or second main point of the paragraph.
5. **The Conclusion**- sums up the main points or ideas and it usually completes the topic.

## What is a literary paragraph?

A literary paragraph is a paragraph about literature. Usually a literary paragraph is written in response to questions or instructions such as: What is the theme in this story? How did the main character’s actions influence the outcome of the story? Describe the changes that a character went through.

## What is the form of a literary paragraph?

### Topic Sentence (first sentence):

A good literary paragraph will have at least 5 sentences, the Topic Sentence is your first sentence and it should:

- State your main idea.
- Answer the question that the paragraph is supposed to respond to.
- Include the name of the book/story/poem/play and its author in the topic sentence.
- Do NOT start your topic sentence with statements like “I think..”, “I chose...”, “I am going to talk about...”.

**Examples:** In “The Stone” by Lloyd Alexander the character Maibon learns an important lesson that changes his attitude about growing older.

In “Stray” by Cynthia Rylant, the dog surprises Doris’s parents by behaving well and being easy to care for.

### Supporting Sentences X 3 of these:

Give examples from the story that support or prove your main idea. ***Be specific.*** For example, if the purpose of the paragraph is to describe a character and your topic sentence states that the character is selfish, then you will think of examples from the story (the character’s actions, words, or thoughts) that prove that he is selfish. Incorporate these examples – quote.

If the purpose of the paragraph is to explain the theme of the story, then your examples will be parts of the story that show the reader what the theme is. Make sure to show how your examples connect to your main idea. Use transition words to move from one example to another: next, as well, furthermore, in addition ....

### Clincher Sentence (last sentence):

The clincher restates the main idea and concludes the paragraph. Show that your supporting details do prove your main idea. Often you can start the clincher with phrases like: “In conclusion...” or “As these examples demonstrate...” Do not include new information or your opinion (unless the question asks for your opinion).

- Be very specific, do not use pronouns (I think, me, my, we, our), but definitely use specific language (descriptive and precise). Do not use informal language or abbreviations.