



facultad de  
estudios generales

# The Structure of the Paragraph

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# Important notice:



At the end of this presentation there is a link to a Microsoft Form quiz. You must score an 80% or higher to pass the quiz.

Please take your time viewing and studying this material before you proceed with the quiz.

# Objectives

- Understand the purpose of a paragraph.
- Identify the main idea, topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentence.
- Learn how to unite ideas and create coherence in an orderly fashion.

# What is a Paragraph?

- The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines “paragraph” as “a subdivision of a written composition that consists of one or more sentences, deals with one point or gives the words of one speaker, and begins on a new usually indented line”.
- The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as “[a] distinct section of a piece of writing, usually dealing with a single theme and indicated by a new line, indentation, or numbering.”

# The Structure of a Paragraph

- **Topic Sentence (T.S.)**
- Supporting Sentences (S.S.)
- *Closing Sentence (C.S)*

# Topic Sentence (Main Idea)

- Is usually at the beginning of a paragraph.
- Expresses the *main idea* of the paragraph.
- Provides additional information related to the characteristics of the paragraph (narrative, expository, descriptive, and persuasive).

# Supporting Sentences

- Provide information that strengthens the topic sentence.
- Typically consist of a minimum of three sentences.
- Illucidate the main idea by explaining, describing, stating a consequence or providing examples.

# Closing Sentences

- Tell the reader that your paragraph is ending.
- Summarize the discussion of your paragraph.
- Include the keypoints of your paragraph.
- Create a transition to the next paragraph.
- Are also called *concluding sentences*.



# EXAMPLE #1:

**My hometown is famous for several amazing natural features (T.S.).** *First, it is noted for the Wheaton River, which is very wide and beautiful (S.S.#1). On either side of this river, which is 175 feet wide, are many willow trees which have long branches that can move gracefully in the wind (S.S.#2). Also, on the other side of the town is Wheaton Hill, which is unusual because it is very steep (S.S.#3). The third amazing feature is the Big Old Tree (S.S.#4). This tree stands two hundred feet tall and is probably about six hundred years old (S.S.#5). These three landmarks are truly amazing and make my hometown a famous place (C.S.).*

# About Example #1:

- The first sentence introduces and states the **main idea**: *Nature features that make the person's hometown famous.*
- The **supporting sentences** mention three natural features and gives details about each one.
- The **closing sentence** re-states the main idea.

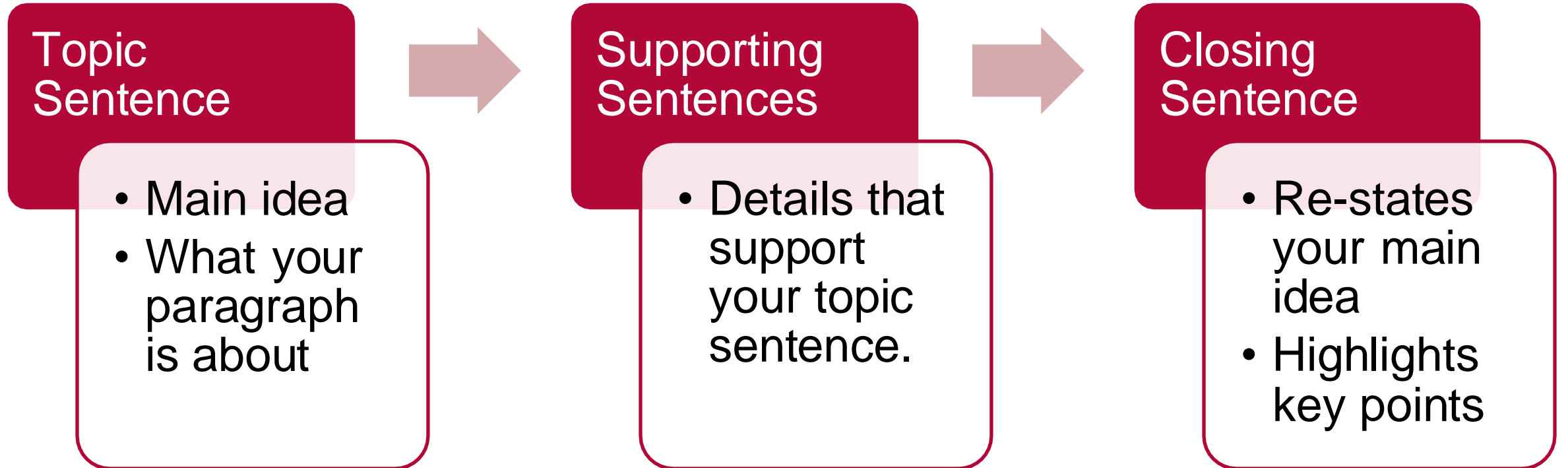
# The Paragraph Outline:

- Paragraph #1
  - Topic Sentence (main idea of the paragraph)
  - Supporting sentence #1
  - Supporting sentence #2
  - Supporting sentence #3
  - Closing sentence

# Paragraph Outline Example:

- **Topic Sentence:**
  - Although most people consider piranhas to be quite dangerous, they are, for the most part, entirely harmless.
- **Supporting Sentence 1:**
  - Piranhas rarely feed on large animals; they eat smaller fish and aquatic plants.
- **Supporting Sentence 2:**
  - When confronted with humans, piranha's first instinct is to flee, not attack.
- **Supporting Sentence 3:**
  - Far more piranhas are eaten by people than people are eaten by piranhas.
- **Closing sentence:**
  - If the fish are well-fed, they won't bite humans.

# Summary



# Unity, Coherence, and Order in a Paragraph

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# What Does Having Unity in a Paragraph Mean?

- The paragraph focuses on the main idea expressed in your topic sentence.
- The supporting sentences explain and build on the main idea.
- The closing sentence ends the paragraph with the same idea.

# What is Coherence in a Paragraph?

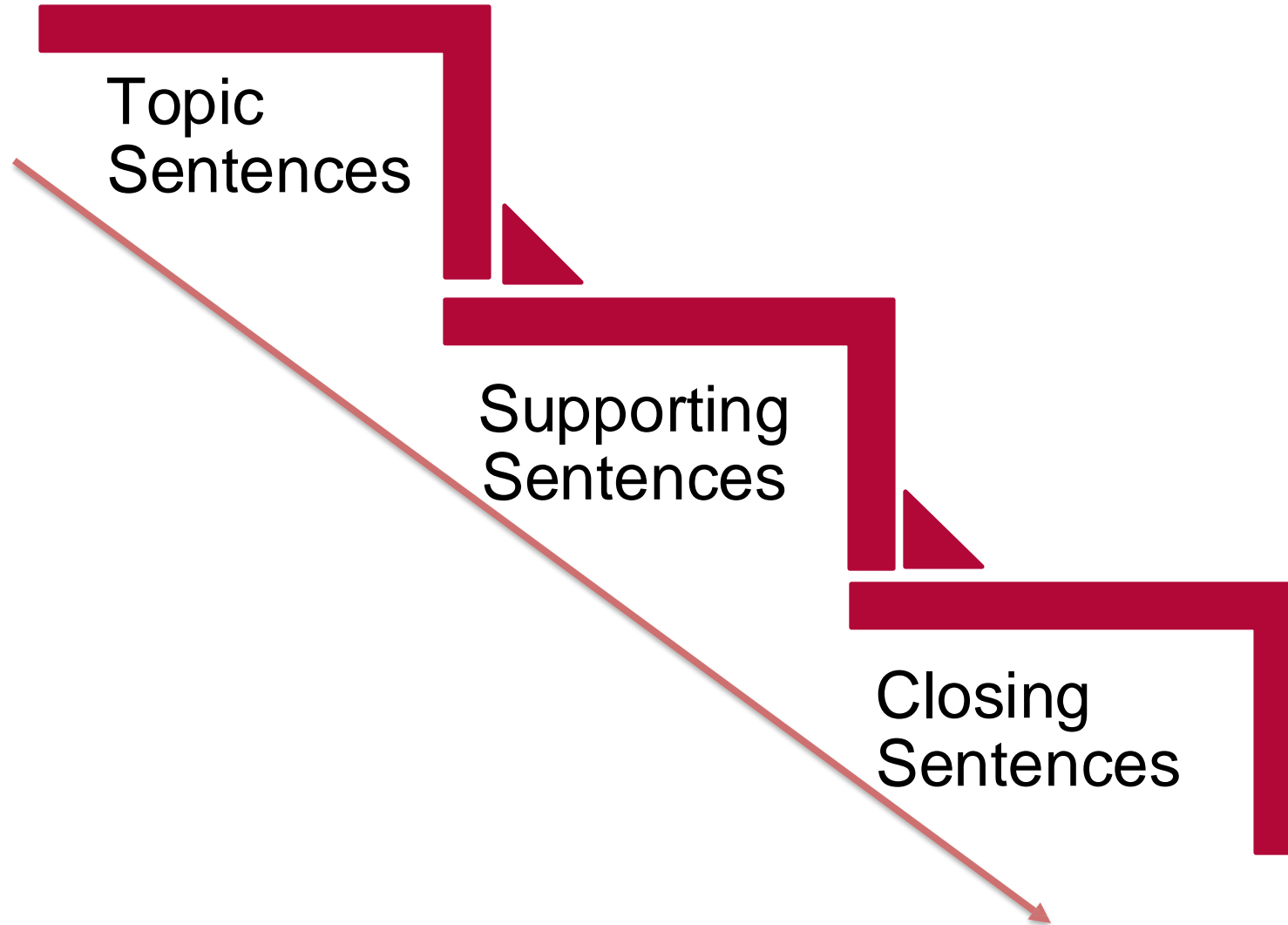
- It establishes a relationship among the ideas presented in a paragraph.
- It uses transitions to show the connection among ideas. You may use transitional phrases or words, as well as sentences that point towards the next idea.
- It uses details to ensure the relationship among ideas is clear.
- It helps the reader to understand the paragraph.
- **We also have a great module on transitions on our webpage!**

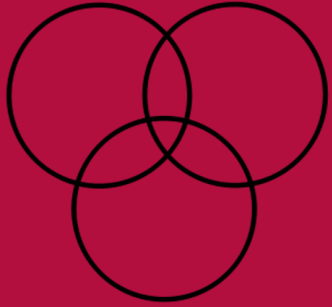


# What is Order in a Paragraph?

- Establishes a logical and clear train of thought.
- Indicates how your ideas will be expressed.
- Denotes why these ideas are expressed in a specific manner.

# Steps for Building a Paragraph





## Unity

- Keeps the main idea on track.



## Coherence

- Establishes a logical relationship among your supporting ideas and your main idea.



## Order

- Provides a logical train of thought.



# Types of Paragraphs

# Narrative Paragraph

- Narrates an event. *Example:*

***Last year** was the first time I had ever been the new kid at school **(T.S.)**. **For the first four days**, I was completely alone **(S.S.)**. Finally, at lunch **on the fifth day**, Karen walked past me **(S.S.)**. Even though I was new, I knew Karen was popular **(S.S.)**. **Soon**, her friends were sitting right next to me **(S.S.)**. I never became great friends with Karen, but **after lunch that day**, it seemed like they were happy to be my friend **(S.S.)**. You cannot convince me that Karen did not know what she was doing **(S.S.)**. I have a great respect for her, and I learned a great deal about what it means to be a true leader **(C.S.)**.*

# Expository Paragraph

- Informs the reader about a subject of your choice. *Example:*

*On **July 16, 1969**, the **Apollo 11** spacecraft launched from the **Kennedy Space Center in Florida (T.S.)**. Its **mission** was to go to the moon **(S.S.)!** The crew consisted of **Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins, and Buzz Aldrin (S.S.)**. The spacecraft **landed** on the moon **in the Sea of Tranquility, a basaltic flood plain, on July 20, 1969 (S.S.)**. The **moonwalk took place the following day**. On **July 21, 1969** at precisely **10:56 EDT**, Commander Neil Armstrong emerged from the Lunar Module and took his famous first step onto the moon's surface **(S.S.)**. He declared, **"That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind!" (S.S.)**. It was a monumental moment in human history **(C.S.)!***

# Descriptive Paragraph

- Describes something in detail. *Example:*

*Sunset is the time of day when our sky meets the outer space solar winds (T.S.). There are blue, pink, and purple swirls, spinning and twisting, like clouds of balloons caught in a whirlwind (S.S.). The sun moves slowly to hide behind the line of horizon, while the moon races to take its place in prominence atop the night sky (S.S.). People slow to a crawl, entranced, fully forgetting the deeds that must still be done (S.S.). There is a coolness, a calmness, when the sun does set (C.S.).*

# Cause and Effect Paragraph

- States a cause and its consequences (effects). *Example:*

***The lack of rain and snow has horrible effects on farmers (T.S.). With no rain their land dries up, and it is very difficult to grow anything (S.S.). When the crops fail, the farmers do not have any choice but to get a second job in order to make the money they need (S.S.). Farming is a full-time job and with a second job, farmers are overworked, stressed and even depressed (S.S.). Many farmers end up selling their land (S.S.). That is why when there is no rain, you notice that most of the farmers are upset (C.S.).***



# Persuasive Paragraph:

- Tries to convince the reader of an specific topic. *Example:*

*Hunters, hikers, and park recreationalists should **turn in poachers (T.S.)**. Poachers are people who kill animals illegally by hunting without a proper permit **(S.S.)**. Not only **is it cruel** to leave an animal carcass, but it can also **spread disease** among other animals **(S.S.)**. That is why it is important **we turn poachers in (S.S.)**. The first thing that can be done is **calling the authorities (S.S.)**. When a call is placed, the operator will ask some questions. So when you see this happening, write the information of the person down **(S.S.)**. The **second thing a person can do** is try to get on the Internet **(S.S.)**. There you can **find out more information** about what you need to do **(S.S.)**. If anyone sees one of these illegal acts being done, now you know what to do to turn them in, **and make Montana a better place** for everyone and everything **(C.S.)**. –Justin Campos 2005*

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After completing the module, click on the following link to take the quiz and send the report to your professor:

<https://forms.office.com/r/vpFzxa674M>

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