

# Writing Skills

## Writing good paragraphs

In this lesson we learn about the building blocks of a good piece of writing. A good essay will be made of good paragraphs and a good paragraph will have a good topic sentence.



### Lesson Outcomes

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- find a topic sentence
- write a topic sentence
- construct a paragraph around the topic sentence



### Curriculum Links

#### LO 3: Writing and Presenting

- apply paragraph conventions to ensure coherence by using topic sentences, introduction and conclusion, logical progression of paragraphs, cause and effect, comparison and contrast



### Lesson Notes

**The topic sentence is the main idea for a paragraph.**

- If you have created a mind map to plan a writing assignment, each branch of the mind map can be turned into a topic sentence.
- There should be only one topic sentence per paragraph. This is because each paragraph should only deal with one main idea and the other sentences in the paragraph will be there to develop the main idea.

**Topic sentences can go in different places within a paragraph.**

- Very often the topic sentence will be the first sentence of a paragraph.  
In paragraphs like this, the topic sentence is used to introduce the main idea and the balance of the paragraph is used to explain this idea or give examples of it.
- Sometimes the topic sentence is in the middle of a paragraph.  
In paragraphs like this there is some preparation before the topic sentence and some further explanation after it.
- Sometimes the topic sentence is kept until the end of a paragraph.  
In these cases the writer will make a number of points, and will keep the reader waiting to find out what point they all lead up to. These paragraphs work well when a writer is creating a narrative (telling a story) and wants to build up suspense or tension.

### Tip!

You should have ONE main idea per paragraph. It is a common fault to have too many ideas in one paragraph. If you base your paragraph on a topic sentence you will not have this problem.



### TASK

- Take the main idea, "The place where I live", and turn it into a good topic sentence.
- Develop the main idea with three supporting ideas that are expressed in the rest of the paragraph.
- Write the paragraph:
  - once with the topic sentence at the beginning of the paragraph;
  - once with the topic sentence in the middle of the paragraph;
  - once with the topic sentence at the end of the paragraph.