

Reading & Writing (C) — Assignment Task

Source Document: Writing Academic English (Chapter 1: What is a Paragraph?)

Topic: Paragraph Structure, Topic Sentences, Unity, and Concluding Sentences

Practice 1: Organizing Sentences into Paragraphs

Directions: Arrange the sentences in each group into a logical paragraph. Underline or mark the topic sentence.

Paragraph 1 (Winter Driving Precautions)

- [1] (**Topic Sentence**) Driving in winter, especially on snowy, icy roads, can be less troublesome if you take a few simple precautions.
- [2] First, put on snow tires if you plan to drive on snowy, icy roads very often.
- [3] Second, check the amount of antifreeze in your radiator and add more if necessary.
- [4] Next, add antifreeze to your windshield washer fluid; otherwise, the fluid will freeze and possibly break the container.
- [5] Finally, it is also a good idea to carry tire chains, a can of spray to unfreeze door locks and a windshield scraper in your car when driving in winter weather.

Paragraph 2 (Alternative Automobile Engines)

- [1] (**Topic Sentence**) Researchers in the automobile industry are experimenting with different types of engines and fuels as alternatives to the conventional gasoline engines.
- [2] One new type of engine, which burns diesel oil instead of gasoline, has been available for several years.
- [3] A second type is the gas turbine engine, which can use fuels made from gasoline, diesel oil, kerosene, other petroleum distillates, or methanol.
- [4] Furthermore, researchers are continuing to work on the development of an efficient, electrically powered automobile.
- [5] Finally, several automobile manufacturers are experimenting with methanol, which is a mixture of gasoline and methyl alcohol, as an automobile fuel.

Paragraph 3 (Evolution of Written Communication)

- [1] (**Topic Sentence**) Some form of written communication has been used throughout the centuries.
- [2] In the earliest times, people carved or painted messages on rocks.
- [3] Later on, people began to write on pieces of leather, which were rolled into scrolls.
- [4] In the Middle Ages, heavy paper called parchment was used for writing; books were laboriously copied by hand.
- [5] With the invention of the printing press in the middle of the fifteenth century, the modern printing industry was born.

Paragraph 4 (Naming Traditions Among American Indians)

- [1] (**Topic Sentence**) American Indian names are very descriptive, for Indians were usually named for a physical attribute, for an occurrence in nature, or for an animal.
- [2] Indians with distinctive physical characteristics might be given such names as Big Foot or Crooked Leg.
- [3] If there had been a big storm on the day of a baby's birth, the baby might have been named Thunder Cloud.
- [4] Grey Eagle, Red Dog, Big Bear, and Spotted Wolf are examples of Indians named after animals.

Paragraph 5 (Questioning Standardized Intelligence Tests)

[1] (Topic Sentence) The validity of standardized intelligence tests is being seriously questioned by educators and psychologists.

[2] For one thing, individual I.Q. scores vary considerably.

[3] Many experts also question whether I.Q. scores are related to intelligence.

[4] Furthermore, most psychologists agree that intelligence tests are biased in favor of middle-class children.

[5] In fact, motivation seems to be just as important as intelligence in determining a person's ability to learn.

Practice 2: Identifying the Parts of a Topic Sentence

Directions: Identify the Topic (names the subject) and the Controlling Idea (limits or controls what the paragraph will discuss) for each sentence.

No.	Topic	Controlling Idea
1	Driving in Tokyo	requires nerves of steel.
2	Driving in Tokyo	requires an aggressive attitude.
3	Living in a dormitory	helps foreign students improve their English faster.
4	Living in a dormitory	helps foreign students learn about American culture more quickly.
5	Living in a dormitory	may cause severe culture shock for some foreign students.
6	San Francisco	is famous for its temperate climate.
7	San Francisco	is well known for its many tourist attractions.
8	San Francisco	has a great variety of ethnic neighborhoods.
9	Meeting and making friends with Americans	is a major problem for many foreign students.
10	Communicating in English	is a major problem for foreign students.
11	Many television commercials	are misleading (in my opinion).
12	The primary cause of inflation	is our dependence on imported oil (in the opinion of economic experts).
13	A good topic sentence	has two essential parts.
14	Owning a large automobile	is quickly becoming an expensive luxury.

Practice 3: Writing Topic Sentences

Directions: Write a well-focused topic sentence for each topic, ensuring it contains both a clear Topic and an effective Controlling Idea.

1. The effect(s) of smoking on a person's health:

Topic Sentence: "Smoking cigarettes severely deteriorates cardiovascular health by damaging blood vessels and elevating long-term heart disease risks."

2. The benefits of foreign travel:

Topic Sentence: "Traveling abroad broadens a person's worldview by exposing them directly to diverse cultural perspectives and lifestyles."

3. The importance of higher education in English Linguistics:

Topic Sentence: "Pursuing a university degree in English Linguistics equips students with essential analytical skills for cross-cultural communication and translation."

4. The cause(s) of urban traffic congestion:

Topic Sentence: "Severe traffic congestion in metropolitan centers stems primarily from inadequate public transportation infrastructure and rapid private vehicle growth."

5. A cultural difference in communication styles:

Topic Sentence: "Indonesian communication tends to rely on indirect and polite conversational cues, whereas Western communication prioritizes directness and clarity."

6. The impact of artificial intelligence on student writing:

Topic Sentence: "Generative AI writing tools can enhance student drafting efficiency but present serious risks to independent critical reasoning if overused."

7. The advantages of independent culinary tourism:

Topic Sentence: "Visiting local independent eateries allows travelers to experience authentic regional heritage far more deeply than dining in chain restaurants."

8. The psychological benefits of recreational sports:

Topic Sentence: "Playing recreational team sports on a regular basis significantly reduces chronic academic stress while improving physical stamina."

9. The challenge of translating culture-specific food names:

Topic Sentence: "Translating traditional Indonesian dish names into English poses difficult lexical hurdles because many heritage ingredients lack direct foreign equivalents."

10. The role of digital technology in modern language preservation:

Topic Sentence: "Digital archives and social media platforms provide unprecedented opportunities for young communities to document and revitalize endangered regional languages."

Practice 4: Writing Concluding Sentences

Directions: Underline or state the main idea of each paragraph, and provide an appropriate concluding sentence using an end-of-paragraph signal (e.g. In conclusion, In summary, In brief).

Paragraph 1: Gas Consumption

Prompt context: You can reduce gas consumption in your car by careful driving and good maintenance...

Concluding Sentence: In brief, adopting sensible driving habits and maintaining proper engine upkeep are reliable ways to minimize automotive fuel expenses.

Paragraph 2: Alternative Energy Sources

Prompt context: Alternative energy sources are becoming increasingly attractive as the energy crisis becomes more severe...

Concluding Sentence: In conclusion, expanding diverse alternative energy systems is vital to overcoming national fossil-fuel shortages and securing future power supplies.

Paragraph 3: Worldwide House Construction

Prompt context: House construction in various parts of the world depends mainly on the availability of building materials...

Concluding Sentence: In summary, vernacular architecture across diverse geographical regions is fundamentally shaped by the indigenous raw materials available in the immediate environment.

Paragraph 4: Everyday English Loanwords

Prompt context: There are numerous everyday words in English that have come from other languages...

Concluding Sentence: In short, everyday English vocabulary consistently demonstrates how multicultural linguistic borrowing enriches modern domestic life.

Paragraph 5: European vs. American Universities

Prompt context: There are two major differences between the European and American university systems...

Concluding Sentence: In conclusion, while European universities grant students extensive autonomous study culminating in comprehensive exams, American institutions mandate continuous classroom participation and periodic testing.