



TIPS FOR WRITING A PARAGRAPH

Developed at Camosun College

This material is intended as a review to help you refresh your writing skills prior to the assessment. It is not meant to teach you new material. If you run into difficulties, it's time to stop and make an appointment for your assessment.

You will be provided two options for your English assessment on the [Assessment Centre](#) website; select the option that you feel is the best fit for you. If you are unsure which assessment option to choose, contact an assessor by emailing accessassessment@camosun.ca or calling (250) 370-3945.

You may also contact a Student Navigator at (250) 370-3466 or (250) 370-3847 to get help with selecting the best starting point for assessment.

What is a paragraph?

A paragraph is a short piece of writing about a single topic. It is made up of three sections:

1. Topic Sentence: present your view about the topic while giving the reader a clear idea what to expect in the sentences that follow.
2. Supporting Sentences: provide support for your topic sentence such as explaining the importance of your points. Use transition words to smoothly move from one idea to the next which helps your writing feel less disconnected.
3. Concluding Sentence: bring the paragraph to a close by linking back to the topic sentence.

Here are two sample paragraphs:

Descriptive

[Topic Sentence]: *I am gliding easily through the calm, blue water of a tropical sea.* [Transition Word]: *First*, I see below me a delicate, tree-like plant growing from a jagged rock. [Transition Word]: *Then*, beside the rock is a huge, blue-green sponge with small coral sticking out from it. There is a bright-pink jelly fish floating above the sponge and many small fish playing among the rocks. Above me is only the blue, blue water. [Transition Word]: *Of course*, beside me are two great friends dressed as I am. We are wearing scuba suits with iron lungs attached to our back. [Transition Word]: *Now*, the taste of salt water is in my mouth, and I can smell the rubber of my mask which is gripped tightly around my face. [Concluding Sentence]: *I hear nothing but the sound of my own breath as I continue to explore the fascinating underwater world that I am in.*

Narrative

[Topic Sentence]: *Last September, I watched my ten-year-old daughter act like an adult in an emergency.* While cleaning the living room carpet, I tripped and fell over the vacuum cleaner hose. [Transition Word]: *At first*, I was dazed. [Transition Word]: *Suddenly*, I realized that my left arm hurt terribly. I called to my daughter Sylvia, who was the only other person at home. When Sylvia saw me on the floor, her face went pale. [Transition Word]: *Then*, she calmly took charge of the situation. She found my phone and called 911. I heard her give our address, exact details of what had happened, and a description of the position I was lying in. I could tell that she was carefully listening to the instructions she was given. [Transition Word]: *Consequently*, when she returned to the living room, Sylvia covered me with a blanket and told me that an ambulance was on its way. She sat by my side in the ambulance and stayed with me while the doctor treated me. [Concluding Sentence]: *My sprained arm bothered me for only three weeks, but I will always feel proud of what my daughter did on that day.*