Writing Effective Paragraphs

A paragraph should be unified, coherent, and well developed. Paragraphs are unified around a main point, and all sentences should clearly relate to the point in some way. The paragraph's main idea should be supported with specific information that develops or discusses the main idea in greater detail.

Creating a Topic Sentence

The topic sentence expresses the main point in the paragraph.
To create the topic sentence, examine the details or examples you will discuss.
- What unifies them?
- What do they have in common?

The answer or conclusion sentence you write is the topic of the paragraph.

Purposes of a Topic Sentence

- To state the main point of a paragraph
- To give the reader a sense of direction the writing will take
- To summarize the paragraph's main point

Placement of Topic Sentences
- Often appears as the first or second sentence in paragraph
- Rarely occurs at the end of the paragraph

Supporting a Topic Sentence with Details

Try using one of these examples to develop your paragraph:
- Add and explain examples
- Tell a story to illustrate your point or opinion
- Discuss a process (How –to)
- Compare or Contrast
- Use cause and effect
- Explain or define a new term or idea
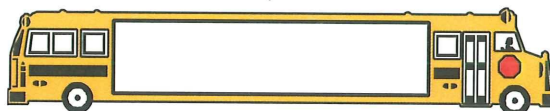
Reasons to Begin a New Paragraph

- To show a change of ideas
- To highlight or point out an important idea by putting it at the beginning or
- end of the paragraph
- To show change in time or place
- To show a difference or contrast in things
- To break up a difficult text

Ways of Arranging Information within a paragraph
Order of time (chronological)
Order of space (descriptions of a location or scene)
Order of suspense (build interest and detail)
Order of importance (from least to most important or most to least important)