

# Paragraph Structure

Below, write a topic sentence for your paragraph. Then, write your supporting details in a logical order, elaborating with examples to further explain your topic sentence. Remember, to develop your ideas fully, a paragraph should consist of 5-10 sentences.

Topic Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Supporting Details:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Go back and proofread your paragraph for spelling, word choices, and grammar.



# Sample Paragraph

The **topic sentence** is the paragraph's first sentence. The topic sentence conveys the paragraph's main point and previews the writer's treatment of the subject, SUVs.

**Supporting sentences** include details, examples, and explanation that directly connect to the topic sentence and develop the topic sentence.

Although currently popular among American drivers, Sport Utility Vehicles, or SUVs, damage the environment by emitting pollution and threatening to limit the supply of natural resources. SUVs release more fumes into the atmosphere because the government does not regulate their fuel standards as strictly as those for cars. As global warming becomes more serious, perhaps the government should impose more limits on SUV emissions to protect citizens from air pollution. In addition, due to their size, SUVs use more gas than cars, which, consequently, harms the environment. Hummers or LandRovers, for example, require much more gas than the average sedan. Consumer demand for more gas to fill SUVs' larger tanks has also resulted in the need to drill for more oil, potentially threatening the conservation of natural wildlife areas, such as in Alaska. Further, the 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico exemplifies the environmental devastation that can result from oil drilling to meet the demand for energy. To curb pollution and the threat to dwindling natural resources such as oil and gas, Americans might consider alternatives such as hybrid vehicles or even public transportation. Consumers should be aware that their choices in vehicles do impact the earth and the preservation of its resources.

Notice the use of **transition words** (underlined) to help the writer's ideas flow smoothly, maintain organization, and shift to another supporting point.

The final sentence refers back to the topic sentence and helps to unify the paragraph.

## Important Terms:

**Paragraph Unity:** Notice that the paragraph is unified around a central point. The supporting sentences develop and explain that point. In other words, a paragraph should focus on one main idea.

**Paragraph Development:** A paragraph must adequately explain and develop the topic sentence. Generally, a paragraph should be about 5-10 sentences. Sometimes, writers need multiple paragraphs to fully explain an idea.

**For more information, see these handouts available in the CHC Writing Center: Topic Sentences, Paragraph Structure (graphic organizer), and Outline for a Five-Paragraph Essay.**