



Writing paragraphs

Most texts - for example, letters, reports or stories - need an **introduction**, a **middle** and an **end**. Text in one long run can put the reader off and is difficult to read, so it's best to split it up into paragraphs.

What is a paragraph?

A paragraph is a group of sentences that **share the same idea**. You use paragraphs to structure your writing, and to make it easier for the reader to follow. When you plan a piece of writing, you decide on the different ideas to include in your writing. You can use paragraphs to develop each of these points.

When you start a new paragraph you write on a new line. If you're using a word processor there's usually a one-line gap between paragraphs.

There's more information about paragraphs in the factsheet **Using paragraphs**.

Will I need to use headings?

It's a good idea to write down a heading for each paragraph before you start writing sentences. You may not want to keep the headings in your final version, but they will help you to stick to your plan in the first draft. Some writing, such as an information leaflet, needs headings. For an example, see the factsheet **Using headings**.

If you're writing a story about your life, you need to start a new paragraph for each key point. For example, you might start with a paragraph about your childhood, followed by a paragraph about your teenage years, then a paragraph about your first job or relationship, and end with a paragraph about what your life is like now.

What is a topic sentence?

A topic sentence gives you the main idea in a paragraph. It's often the first sentence in a paragraph. For example, if you're writing about your family, the topic sentence in your first paragraph could be **My large family are very close**. You could then write more sentences to add to this idea in the paragraph.

Linking paragraphs

When writing paragraphs, it's helpful to use **linking words or phrases** to help the reader make sense of your whole text. If you're writing about something that's happened in the past, you can use phrases to link ideas over a period of time. For example, if you're writing about starting a course in college, your first paragraph could begin **When I started...** If you want to write about what you've achieved, you could start your next paragraph **Since then....** These linking words make it easier for the reader to follow your story.