

## The Second Lecture

# ***The Structure of a Paragraph***

In this lecture, you will learn ...

- the definition of a paragraph.
- the parts of a paragraph,
- how to identify and write topic sentences.

As you learned in the last lecture, a paragraph is a group of sentences about a single *topic*. Together, the sentences of the paragraph explain the writer's main *idea*, (most important idea) about the topic. In academic writing, a paragraph is often between five and ten sentences long, but it can be longer or shorter, depending on the topic. The first sentence of a paragraph is usually indented (moved in) a few spaces.

### **1- Understanding a paragraph**

Before we start, let's first read the passage on page 11.

- *Now, answer these questions*
  - a. What is the topic of this paragraph?
  - b. What is the main idea about the topic?
  - c. What ideas help explain the main idea?

### **2- Paragraph Organization**

- **What makes a paragraph?**

A paragraph has three basic parts:

1- **The topic sentence.** This is the main idea of the paragraph. It is usually the first sentence of the paragraph, and it is the most general sentence of the paragraph.

2. **The supporting sentences.** These are sentences that talk about or explain the topic sentence. These are more detailed ideas that follow the topic sentence.

**3. The concluding sentence.** This may be found as the last sentence of a paragraph. It can finish a paragraph by repeating the main idea or just giving a final comment about the topic.

- Now, read the paragraph about Switzerland in exercise 1 on page 11 again. Circle the topic sentence, put one line under the supporting sentences, and put two lines under the concluding sentence.

### ***3- The topic and the main idea***

The topic sentence usually:

- comes first in a paragraph.
- gives the writer's main idea or opinion about the topic and helps the reader understand what the paragraph is going to talk about.

**Let's now practice. Circle the topic of the sentence. Underline the main idea about the topic.**

- a. Switzerland is a very interesting country to visit.
- b. Dogs make excellent pets
- c. Football is my favorite sport because it is exciting to watch.
- d. One of the most valuable tools for students is the computer.
- e. My sister and I have very different personalities.
- f. Summer is the best time to travel in my country.
- g. My hometown is a friendly place to live.

**Now, let's do the exercises on page 14.**