



PNU University

Advanced Writing

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امروزه کتاب‌خوانی و علم‌آموزی، نه تنها یک وظیفه‌ی ملی، که یک واجب دینی است.

مقام معظم رهبری

در عصر حاضر یکی از شاخصه‌های ارزیابی رشد، توسعه و پیشرفت فرهنگی هر کشوری میزان تولید کتاب، مطالعه و کتاب‌خوانی مردم آن مرز و بوم است. ایران اسلامی نیز از دیرباز تاکنون با داشتن تمدنی چندهزارساله و مراکز متعدد علمی، فرهنگی، کتابخانه‌های معتبر، علما و دانشمندان بزرگ با آثار ارزشمند تاریخی، سرآمد دولت‌ها و ملت‌های دیگر بوده و در عرصه‌ی فرهنگ و تمدن جهانی به‌سان خورشیدی تابناک همچنان می‌درخشد و با فرزندان نیک‌نهاد خویش هنرنمایی می‌کند. چه کسی است که در دنیا با دانشمندان فرزانه و نام‌آور ایرانی همچون ابوعلی سینا، ابوریحان بیرونی، فارابی، خوارزمی و ... همچنین شاعران برجسته‌ای نظیر فردوسی، سعدی، مولوی، حافظ و ... آشنا نباشد و در مقابل عظمت آنها سر تعظیم فرود نیاورد. تمامی این افتخارات ارزشمند، برگرفته از میزان عشق و علاقه فراوان ملت ما به فراگیری علم و دانش از طریق خواندن و مطالعه منابع و کتاب‌های گوناگون است. به شکرانه‌ی الهی، تاریخ و گذشته ما، همیشه درخشان و پربار است. ولی اکنون در این زمینه در چه جایگاهی قرار داریم؟ آمار و ارقام ارائه‌شده از سوی مجامع و سازمان‌های فرهنگی در مورد سرانه‌ی مطالعه‌ی هر ایرانی، برایمان چندان امیدوارکننده نمی‌باشد و رهبر معظم انقلاب اسلامی نیز از این وضعیت بارها اظهار گله و ناخشنودی نموده‌اند.

کتاب، دروازه‌ای به سوی گستره‌ی دانش و معرفت است و کتاب خوب، یکی از بهترین ابزارهای کمال بشری است. همه‌ی دستاوردهای بشر در سراسر عمر جهان تا آنجا که قابل کتابت بوده است، در میان دست‌نوشته‌هایی است که انسان‌ها پدید آورده و می‌آورند. در این مجموعه‌ی بی‌نظیر، تعالیم الهی، درس‌های پیامبران به بشر، و همچنین علوم مختلفی است که سعادت بشر بدون آگاهی از آنها امکان‌پذیر نیست. کسی که با دنیای زیبا و زندگی‌بخش کتاب ارتباط ندارد بی‌شک از مهم‌ترین دستاوردهای انسانی و نیز از بیشترین معارف الهی و بشری محروم است. با این دیدگاه، به‌روشنی می‌توان ارزش و مفهوم رمزی عمیق در این حقیقت تاریخی را دریافت که اولین خطاب خداوند متعال به پیامبر گرامی اسلام (ص) این است که «بخوان!» و در اولین

سوره‌ای که بر آن فرستاده‌ی عظیم‌الشان خداوند، فرود آمده، نام «قلم» به تجلیل یاد شده‌است: «اقْرَأْ وَ رَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ. الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ» در اهمیت عنصر کتاب برای تکامل جامعه‌ی انسانی، همین بس که تمامی ادیان آسمانی و رجال بزرگ تاریخ بشری، از طریق کتاب جاودانه مانده‌اند.

دانشگاه پیام‌نور با گستره‌ی جغرافیایی ایران‌شمول خود با هدف آموزش برای همه، همه‌جا و همه‌وقت، به‌عنوان دانشگاهی کتاب‌محور در نظام آموزش عالی کشورمان، افتخار دارد جایگاه اندیشه‌سازی و خردورزی بخش عظیمی از جوانان جوای علم این مرز و بوم باشد. تلاش فراوانی در ایام طولانی فعالیت این دانشگاه انجام پذیرفته تا با بهره‌گیری از تجربه‌های گرانقدر استادان و صاحب‌نظران برجسته کشورمان، کتاب‌ها و منابع آموزشی درسی شاخص و خودآموز تولید شود. در آینده هم، این مهم با هدف ارتقای سطح علمی، روزآمدی و توجه بیشتر به نیازهای مخاطبان دانشگاه پیام‌نور با جدیت ادامه خواهد داشت. به‌طور قطع استفاده از نظرات استادان، صاحب‌نظران و دانشجویان محترم، ما را در انجام این وظیفه‌ی مهم و خطیر یاری‌رسان خواهد بود. پیشاپیش از تمامی عزیزانی که با نقد، تصحیح و پیشنهادهای خود ما را در انجام این وظیفه‌ی خطیر یاری می‌رسانند، سپاسگزاری می‌نماییم. لازم است از تمامی اندیشمندانی که تاکنون دانشگاه پیام‌نور را منزلگاه اندیشه‌سازی خود دانسته و ما را در تولید کتاب و محتوای آموزشی درسی یاری نموده‌اند، صمیمانه قدردانی گردد. موفقیت و بهروزی تمامی دانشجویان و دانش‌پژوهان عزیز آرزوی همیشگی ما است.

دانشگاه پیام‌نور

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Preface

This book is an attempt to help EFL students in general and Payame Noor University students in particular to improve their English writing skills. It aims at helping students who have passed two basic courses of grammar and writing I and II to take a step further in combining grammatically correct sentences into paragraphs.

There is no doubt that the practice of writing good paragraphs is essential to writing. Therefore, this book provides basic concepts and strategies for paragraph writing and involves students in analyzing and synthesizing the main sections of different types of paragraphs. There are also short tasks designed to develop paragraph writing strategies in a self-study process.

Due to the limited number of hours of class instruction at Payame Noor University, guidelines and instructions are provided to help students to be as independent as possible. For the same reason, key to exercises has been provided at the end of the book; however, students are advised not to refer to the key before doing the exercises themselves.

The book includes guided paragraph writing and contains 9 units. Unit one introduces pre-writing activities, the definition, and different sections of a paragraph. The second unit familiarizes students with characteristics of paragraphs. Units 3 to 9 introduce 7 types of paragraphs and elaborate on the characteristics and sections of paragraphs introduced in the first and second units. Each unit ends with a variety of exercises. Attempt has been made to provide students with the maximum amount of samples, exercises and instructions in a simple language; however, the book is not certainly devoid of defect. Therefore, comments and suggestions for improvement are most welcome.

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Unit 1

Paragraph

In this unit, you will learn about:

- Pre-writing activities
- Drawing a mind map
- Definition of a paragraph
- Basic parts of a paragraph
- Topic sentence, supporting sentences, concluding sentence

1.1. Pre-writing activities

When you want to write, the first point to keep in mind is the purpose or the main point of your writing. To do this, you have to read the topic, think about it, and understand it. While you are thinking about the topic, different ideas might cross your mind. Make a note of all the ideas that come to your mind without judging them. No matter how relevant or irrelevant they might seem, make a list of them all. The aim of this stage is to produce as many ideas as possible, so you do not need to worry about correct spelling or grammar. This is called brainstorming.

Task 1.1. Suppose that you have been asked to write about *problems with the public transport*. Read the topic again, reflect on it and underline the key words that need to be focused on. Then make a list of ideas that you can think of in the spaces provided. Two ideas have been written as clues.

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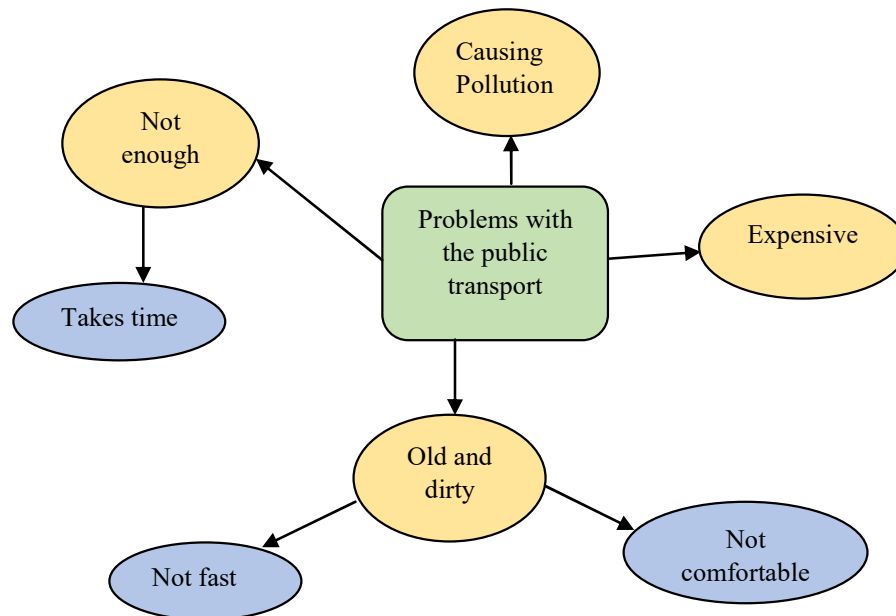
- There is not enough public transport.
- Buses are usually slow and dirty.

.....

.....

1.2. Drawing a mind map

After brainstorming, it is time to go through the list to choose the ideas that are intimately relevant to the topic and important enough to be included in your writing. This will help you to come up with a list of ideas that have to be included; however, the ideas need to be put in some order. An effective way to sort them is to draw a **map** or diagram for them. Look at the **mind map** for the topic in Task 1.1. The topic is in the middle and four main problems have been written for it. Two of the problems have further subdivisions too.



Task 1.2. A topic similar to the one in Task 1.1 is: *The consequences of traffic congestion*. Brainstorm ideas for the topic and draw a similar mind map for your ideas.

Put the topic in a big circle in the middle of the page. Then add the main ideas in smaller circles and link them to the main circle with a line. You can have even smaller circles that are linked to the second circles as their subdivisions.

There are different types of pre-writing activities. Brainstorming, mentioned above, is just one possible way. Other techniques include: reading about the topic, discussing the topic with friends and classmates, using the Internet, etc. In most of the units of this book we are assuming that you have to write promptly and you do not have enough time to discuss or explore the topic.

Now that you have an outline of your paragraph, you are ready to leave the pre-writing stage and initiate the drafting stage and organize your ideas in the form of a paragraph. In the next sections of this unit and unit 2 you will get familiar with the characteristics of paragraphs.

1.3. Definition of a paragraph

Let's begin with what a paragraph is.

Task 1.3. Form a group with two or three of your classmates and follow these steps:

- Write your own definition of the word *paragraph*.
- Compare your definitions and find the similarities and differences.
- Decide which words and expressions have been repeated in most definitions.
- Decide which parts should be kept in the definition and which parts should be deleted.
- Write down your final definition.

.....

The definitions suggested in Task 1.3 must have included words and expressions such as: *organized*, *coherent*, *single topic*, and *sentences*. Therefore, we can define a paragraph as a series of

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sentences that are organized, coherent, and related to a single topic. Almost every piece of writing that you do will be organized into paragraphs. Dividing your work into paragraphs must show the reader where the subdivisions of your thoughts begin and end; this helps the reader to grasp the main points of your writing.

Paragraphs contain different kinds of information. A paragraph can contain a series of brief examples to illustrate a point. It might describe a person, place, or process; narrate a series of events; compare and contrast two or more things; classify items by category; or show a cause and effect relationship.

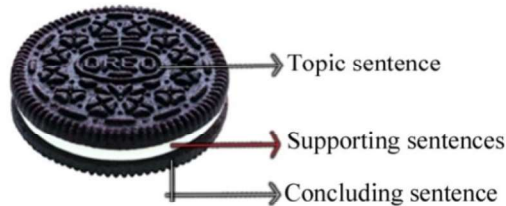
1.4. Basic parts of a paragraph

A paragraph has three basic parts: the **topic sentence**, the **supporting sentences**, and the **concluding sentence**. A successful paragraph begins with a main idea. This idea is explained, developed, and reinforced in the paragraph, with evidence provided. Effective paragraphs help your reader to follow your line of reasoning (or your argument). For example, in Task 1.1 you brainstormed the topic and ended up with a mind map of ideas. Based on the map, you can have a topic sentence to include the four ideas. Then, each idea can be explained, illustrated, and reinforced in the supporting sentences that follow the topic sentence. At the end of the paragraph you can have a concluding sentence to sum it up.

Let's now exemplify the basic parts of a paragraph; a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a conclusion. Think of a paragraph as an Oreo cookie. The first and last sentences are like the top and bottom chocolate cookie of an Oreo; they are general statements about the topic which tie the paragraph together. The middle sentences are like the white creamy filling, which contains information, facts, opinions, and examples that support or develop the topic sentence.

A paragraph has three basic parts:

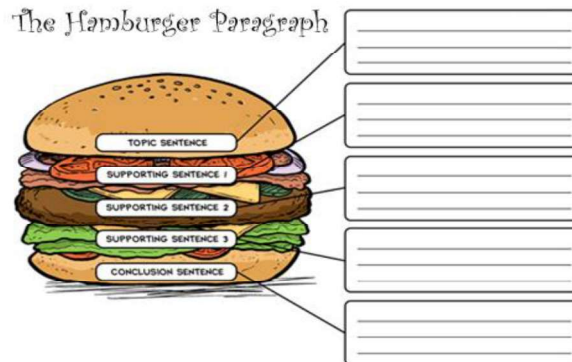
1. **The topic sentence.** This is the main idea of the paragraph. It is usually the first sentence of the paragraph, and it is the most general sentence of the paragraph.
2. **The supporting sentences.** These are sentences that talk about or explain the topic sentence. They are more detailed ideas 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 think of a paragraph as a hamburger. The first and last sentences are like the top and bottom buns of a hamburger. We start with the top bun, the topic sentence. The topic sentence is the very first sentence of your paragraph which tells what the paragraph is going to be about. The second sentence is like the lettuce in a hamburger which is not the most important detail and is placed under the topic sentence, the top bun. Under the lettuce, there is the tomato, the second detail of our paragraph. The third sentence is like the layer of cheese in your hamburger. This layer adds more details. Meat is the last detail of the hamburger and in your paragraph it is the last and the most important detail. Finally, we have the bottom bun, the closing sentence, which looks like the topic sentence and needs to summarize the topic.

Task 1.4. Read the following paragraph, identify its different components (topic sentence, supporting sentences, and closing sentence), and put them in the spaces provided next to the hamburger.

There are many reasons that I love to teach. First of all, I love to teach because I like being at school. Another reason is that the days go by quickly when I am busy teaching. My third reason is because I love seeing a student understand something new. Finally, I love to teach because I love to be around kids. These are just a few reasons I love to teach.



Let's now explore each of the components of a paragraph to see how they fit together to create the structure of a paragraph. We start with the topic sentence, its features, types and locations.

Topic sentence

Every paragraph needs to make one main point. This point is located in the topic sentence. Usually, but not always, the topic sentence is the first sentence of the paragraph. The first sentence of the following sample paragraph is its topic sentence.

My first day of college was a disaster. *First, I went to the wrong classroom for math. I was sitting in the class, surrounded by people taking notes and paying attention to how to do equations, which would have been okay if I was supposed to be in an algebra class. In reality,*

I was supposed to be in geometry, and when I discovered my error, I had already missed the first twenty minutes of a one-hour class. When I got to the correct class, all twenty-five students turned and looked at me as the teacher said, "You're late." That would have been bad enough, but in my next class my history teacher spoke so fast I could not follow most of what he said. The only thing I did hear was that we were having a quiz tomorrow over today's lecture. My day seemed to be going better during botany class, that is, until we visited the lab. I had a sneezing fit because of one of the plants in the lab and had to leave the room. When I finally finished my classes for the day, I discovered I had locked my keys in the car and had to wait for my brother to bring another set. My first day of school was so bad that I know the rest will have to be better.

The topic sentence of the above paragraph has most of the characteristics of a good topic sentence. First of all, it is suitable to the size of the paragraph. That is, it is narrow and specific enough to be supported by one paragraph. Besides, it states a single main point or position about the topic. When we read it, we immediately realize that the writer is going to write about his first day of college that has gone terribly wrong. Finally, the main point stated in the topic sentence can be proven and explained by the writer and it is a firm and forceful idea. Now read the paragraph once more to get more familiar with the way the writer has developed the paragraph and has supported the main point of the topic sentence. In the next sections of this unit you will have more opportunities to work on topic sentences.

Task 1.5. Imagine that you have been asked to write a paragraph about *The health benefits of chocolate*.

If you follow the pre-writing activities mentioned in the previous section, you might come up with the following list of ideas:

- Improves heart health.....
- Relaxes blood vessels.....
- Lowers risk of stroke.....
- Lowers risk of heart disease.....

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– Lowers blood pressure.....

Try to write a topic sentence for your paragraph that includes all the mentioned ideas.

.....
.....

In the above task, the main idea is that chocolate can improve heart health. The rest of the paragraph needs to stay focused on this idea and prove that it is true. Therefore, a good topic sentence for your ideas in Task 1.5 can be: *Chocolate can have many health benefits.*

Read the suggested topic sentence again and pay attention to its underlined key words. It is clear that in the paragraph which is supposed to follow this topic sentence we have to write about *chocolate* and *health benefits* of chocolate. Therefore, the topic sentence is restricting us to the *benefits* of chocolate not any other information such as, for example, the *disadvantages of chocolate*.

Not only is a topic sentence the first sentence of a paragraph, but, more importantly, it is **the most general** sentence in a paragraph. What does *most general* mean? It means that there are not many details in the sentence, but that the sentence introduces an overall idea that you want to discuss later in the paragraph. For example, suppose that you want to write a paragraph about the natural landmarks of your hometown. The topic sentence of your paragraph might look like this: *My hometown is famous for several amazing natural features.*

Note how the topic sentence states a general idea and does not mention any specific details about the town's geography. It leaves the details to the rest of the sentences that are supposed to provide support for the topic sentence.

Remember that a good topic sentence:

- informs the reader of the subject that will be discussed in the paragraph;
- asserts the writer's point of view or attitude;

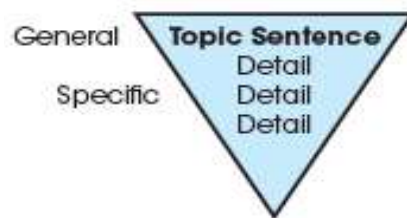
- encourages the reader to continue reading, and
- is not vague, rambling, too narrow or too broad.

Task 1.6. Here are two examples that are not considered as good topic sentences. Can you figure out why they are not good enough?

1. My hometown is famous because it is located near a big river which is very wide, and because it is built near an unusually steep hill.
2. Clouds are white.

Location of the topic sentence

Although a topic sentence can appear anywhere in a paragraph, it is usually first or last.



Topic sentence first

In most paragraphs, the topic sentence comes first. The author states his or her main point and then explains it. The following sample paragraph begins with a topic sentence. The details which follow it repeat the controlling idea of the paragraph and are arranged in chronological order, that is, from first to last:

Constructing a wedding cake is a complicated process. Before any baking takes place, the size of the cake and the decorative design to be used must be determined. Then the layers are baked. On a large cake the bottom layers may be as much as sixteen inches in diameter. Because of their size, these layers must be baked one at a time, a process



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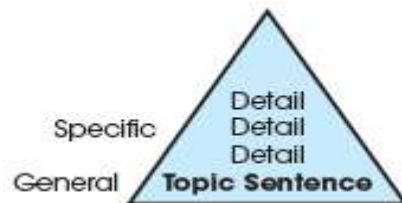
which may actually take an entire day. Once the layers are cooled, they are matched and frosted. Since large wedding cakes are surprisingly heavy, half-inch solid rods must be measured, cut, and carefully driven into the bottom layers. The rods provide hidden support for the heavy upper layers. When all the layers are set in place, flowers, decorations, and leaves of frosting are added. These delicate touches individualize the wedding cake and transform it from merely a cake into a beautiful work of art.

In the above paragraph, the topic sentence is: *constructing a wedding cake is a complicated process*. The steps involved in constructing this type of cake are told in time order, beginning with baking and ending with decorating. Note that, although the paragraph draws a logical conclusion, the topic sentence is not repeated in the end position.

Topic sentence last

The second most likely place for a topic sentence to appear is last in a paragraph. When using this arrangement, a writer leads up to the main point and then states it at the end. The following sample paragraph

is an example of one in which the topic sentence and controlling idea appear in the final position.

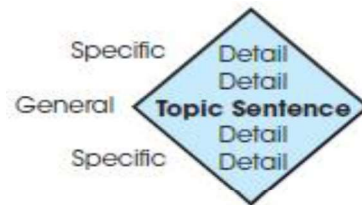


People do it every day. They log on to their favorite website and browse for hours, checking out bargains. They put whatever they like into their shopping carts, knowing they can put each one aside before they finalize their purchases. On the way, they may enter a marketing promotion in the hopes of winning a prize. And then, when they have decided on their purchases, they enter private information without giving it a thought. With a click, they release their personal data into what may or may not be a secure zone. Despite what many people believe, internet shopping is not that safe.

In this paragraph, the idea that Internet shopping may not be safe has not been stated at the beginning of the paragraph. Details of internet shopping have been presented and at the end the main idea has been stated in the topic sentence.

Topic sentence in the middle

If a topic sentence is placed neither first nor last, it may appear somewhere in the middle of a paragraph. In this arrangement, the sentences before the



topic sentence lead up to or introduce the main idea. Those that follow the main idea explain or describe it. The following is a sample paragraph with the topic sentence in the middle position.

When a camera flash is used in a low-light environment, the subject's eyes may appear red in the finished photograph. What is known as "red-eye" is the result of light from the flash reflecting off the pupils of the eyes. The phenomenon of red-eye can be lessened by using the red-eye reduction feature found on many cameras. This feature activates a lamp which shines a small light directly into the subject's eyes. When this happens, the diameter of the pupil is reduced, thus tightening the opening in the iris. Since a smaller pupil means a smaller reflection, the chances of red-eye occurring are greatly reduced.

In the above paragraph, the topic sentence is the phenomenon of red-eye that can be lessened by using the red-eye reduction feature found on many cameras. It serves to connect information about the cause of red-eye (at the beginning of the paragraph) with information about how the problem can be alleviated (after the topic sentence).

Task 1.7. Identify and then underline the topic sentence in paragraphs 1 and 2 below. In the first one, the writer starts with general health benefits of fruits and moves on to specific examples of fruits and their benefits. In the second paragraph, the writer starts with examples of writing as both a solitary and collaborative activity and finalizes the paragraph with a statement about writing being both solitary and collaborative.

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Paragraph 1. *Fruits contain many nutrients and offer a variety of health benefits. Oranges contain Vitamin C, a vitamin that people widely recognize as helpful in maintaining immunity and fighting colds. The high potassium and low sodium contents in bananas help regulate blood pressure. Apples have fiber, which aids the body's digestive system. The antioxidants in blueberries aid the body in many ways, including by reducing free radicals.*

Paragraph 2. *Often, journal writing is a very personal and private activity. Some people who write journals never share a single word of their writing. Note taking for a college course is also an act that writers usually undertake individually. At other times, however, writing is explicitly collaborative, such as when scientists co-author publications or when more than one person writes a novel. But even single-authored pieces of writing are often the result of many people working together. For instance, published writing-from newspaper articles to scholarly texts and to movie reviews-undergoes editing and revisions. Receiving outside feedback on a piece of writing is a common and crucial element of turning a good draft into something publishable. Given these varied situations, writing can be both a solitary and collaborative endeavor.*

Implied main idea

It is important to recognize that you may not always find a topic sentence in each paragraph. Sometimes the main idea is implied. What this means is that there is not an explicitly stated main idea sentence but one that you, as a reader, must figure out. The term most often used to describe this is *inference*. You infer the main idea in this situation. In this book, however, we focus on paragraphs with a topic sentence.

How to understand an implied main idea?

- First, identify the topic of the paragraph. What is this paragraph about?

- Then, read all the supporting details carefully. What does the writer want you to know about the topic?
- How do the details connect? What larger idea do they explain?
- Express this idea in your own words. The implied main idea sentence must be broad enough to cover all the details in the paragraph but must not be too narrow so that some details are left out.

Task 1.8. Read the following paragraph and answer the questions.

1. Which sentence is the topic sentence?
2. How has the topic sentence been supported?
3. How are the details connected with each other?

There are many advantages for birds that live in communities. They keep warmer and save more energy than those who roost separately. Another advantage to staying in groups is that many birds are more likely to find food and detect danger than a lonely bird-several pairs of eyes are better than one. In addition, birds that eat on the ground with their group can more easily escape attack because at least one member of the group will alert the others. Then, when all the birds fly upward to escape together, they cause confusion, turning a predator's interest away from any one individual. Several small birds may even act together to scare a larger intruder and drive it away.

**Supporting sentences**

Supporting sentences follow the topic sentence in a paragraph and add details to the paragraph by listing examples, steps, reasons, or facts. In the next units you will learn about different ways of supporting topic sentences.

Task 1.9. Read the following paragraph and pay specific attention to the supporting sentences. In what way has the writer supported the topic sentence?