

USING THE TOPIC AND SUPPORT PARADIGM

A paradigm is a way of doing things, usually systematically. There is a paradigm for writing paragraphs which is very useful. This paradigm involves writing a topic sentence, having about three supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence.

Most collegiate writing depends on your ability to provide topic sentences and provide supporting sentences in your paragraphs.

Topic Sentences open the paragraph and state the main idea of the paragraph.

Supporting Sentences provide details about the topic, help to support the main idea, or perform other functions as needed in support of the topic sentence.

Concluding Sentence helps paragraphs to have a sense of closure, and they sometimes provide a transition to another paragraph (that is, they may allude to an approaching idea which is found in the next paragraph).

EX:

Butterflies are marvelous creatures. They possess an unusual life cycle, changing from different forms throughout their lives. They are a major pollinating insect. Even at their size, butterflies are known to migrate over hundreds of miles. Finally, butterflies are one of the few creatures on earth which are able to mimic other insects to stave off predators.

Notice the ordering of the sentences (from Topic Sentence to Supporting Sentences to Concluding Sentence).

1. Butterflies are marvelous creatures.
2. They possess an unusual life cycle, changing from different forms throughout their lives.
3. They are a major pollinating insect.
4. Even at their size, butterflies are known to migrate over hundreds of miles.
5. Finally, butterflies are one of the few creatures on earth which are able to mimic other insects to stave off predators.

This ordering provides the reader with the ability to find particular forms of information within a larger text. Therefore, this order is useful and ideal for college writing.