

## Paragraphs: Topic/Support/Conclusion

The **Topic/Support/Conclusion** model is the standard for paragraph writing.

1. **The Topic Sentence** tells the reader exactly what the paragraph will about.
2. **The Supporting sentences** are the muscle of the paragraph. They provide the hard facts that relate to the paragraph's Claim or Topic Sentence.
3. **The Conclusion** re-states the claim in a different manner that also "wraps" it up into a nice neat package.

If you follow these three easy steps (**Topic/Support/Conclusion**), your paragraphs will be easily understood.

**Directions:** In the following paragraph, label each of the following sentences as either being a topic sentence, a supporting sentence or as a concluding sentence.

1. Beavers do a lot of good work when they build their dams in the right places.
2. First, beaver dams slow down the rush of water in brooks and streams.
3. Brooks that otherwise would dry up in the summer flow all year 'round if a beaver dam is built across them.
4. Next, the trees and bushes near the brooks have enough moisture to grow well.
5. Their roots hold the soil so it does not wash away.
6. Also, wells that usually dry up in the summer hold water all year when beavers are put to work on nearby streams.
7. In conclusion, beaver dams can be really helpful when they are in the right places.

**Write your answers below next to the number:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

**Directions:** A paragraph starts with the topic sentence; "Adolescent suicide affects the families of the victim in many negative ways." Circle three of the following 5 sentences that would make good supporting sentences for that topic.

1. According to Arnold Kiev in his recent book *The Courage To Live*, parents feel that suicide is a sign that they have failed as parents.
2. According to William L. Coleman, author of the book *Understanding Suicide*, 71 percent of youths who commit suicide come from broken homes.
3. An article in *USA Today* stated that families that have experienced the suicide of a family member suffer financial instability.
4. In addition, *Time* magazine says that suicide is the third leading killer of teenagers between 15 and 19, and the numbers have increased 20% since 1977 and 200% since 1950.
5. Furthermore, many psychiatrists point to statistics demonstrating that certain other family members might even attempt suicide themselves because of guilt feelings concerning the suicide of an adolescent member.

**Directions:** A paragraph starts with the topic sentence; "Smoking can cause social problems." Circle three of the following 5 sentences that would make good supporting sentences for that topic.

1. It is becoming more common for employers to ask job applicants if they smoke.
2. Evidence proves that there are health hazards from tobacco smoke not only to the smoker but to the non-smoker as well, a fact that may cause even more anger between the two groups.
3. Many non-smokers prefer not to date smokers because of the obvious odors associated with smoking.
4. Public opinion is shifting towards a negative view of smokers resulting in disagreements between smokers and non-smokers when non-smokers make jokes about smokers or when smokers are inconsiderate enough to smoke in non-smoking areas.
5. Smoking can cause serious health problems.