

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Arresto

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Writing Section # \_\_\_\_\_

# ¶ Paragraphing

One of the main errors that young students consistently make in their writing is the dreaded blob – the assignment which should be broken into numerous paragraphs, which is actually written as one enormous blob. The blob must be defeated. It's time to learn how to write properly.

A paragraph is a collection of related sentences dealing with a single topic. Paragraphing will not only help you to become a better and more organized writer, but it will also greatly assist the reader in understanding what you are trying to say. From now on, unless you are writing a short response, you must ALWAYS break up your writing into multiple paragraphs. When handwriting, indent approximately one inch when you want to begin a new paragraph. When using a word processor (computer), simply hit the TAB button to indent perfectly every single time. Do not skip a bunch of lines between your paragraphs – just indent!

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## WHEN TO START A NEW PARAGRAPH

**The first two examples mainly deal with academic writing – essays, DBQs, research papers, tests, etc.**

**1. New Topic or Idea** - The basic rule of thumb with paragraphing is to keep one idea to one paragraph. If you begin to transition into a new idea, it belongs in a new paragraph. You can also have several points in a single paragraph as long as they relate to the overall topic of the paragraph. If the paragraph starts to get really long or contains complicated information, then splitting up the ideas into separate paragraphs might be the best way to go. Sometimes the reader's eyes need a break. Paragraphs give the reader a chance to rest and make your writing more readable.

**2. Introduction and Conclusion** - In academic writing, your introductory and concluding information should always be a new paragraph. We will learn how to write effective intros and conclusions later in the year.

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**The following examples will mostly apply to fiction writing (short stories and novels), but may help you in academic writing as well.**

**3. Change of Time** - When writing a story, a change in time requires a new paragraph.

**4. Change of Location** - When the characters or action move from one location to another, a new paragraph is necessary.

**5. Change of Speaker** - When writing dialogue, every time the person speaking changes, you must indent because it's a new paragraph.

**6. Dramatic Effect** - When a writer wants something to really stand out, it may be its own separate paragraph. For example, if there's an explosion, there may be a paragraph which is simply "Boom."

# THE HAMBURGER PARAGRAPH



To be used for **short responses** and **body paragraphs** in essays.

**Topic Sentence (TS)** – A sentence which provides the main idea of the paragraph. For a short response, include the **FAT** (Format, Author, Title). The easiest (but *not* the most creative) way to create a topic sentence is to echo the question:

Q – Why is Grand Avenue so awesome?

A – Grand Avenue is so awesome because... (Traditional echo)

A – There are many fantastic schools on Long Island, but Grand Avenue is truly an amazing school for numerous reasons. (More creative TS)

**NEVER** begin your response with the word “because.”

**Concrete (or Supporting) Details (CD)** – Specific text-based details from the reading that form the core of your paragraphs and specifically answer the question or prove your thesis. Synonyms include *facts, examples, support, proof, evidence, quotations, paraphrasing, or plot references*. Can be a direct quote or paraphrased from the original source.

**Commentary (CM)** – One or two sentences which provide information from your own brain - this info *will not be found in the reading*. These are the conclusions that you draw based on the given information. Synonyms include *prediction, opinion, insight, analysis, interpretation, inference, personal response, feelings, evaluation, explication, and reflection*.

**AVOID** the phrases “I think,” “I believe,” “In my opinion,” “To me,” and “I feel.” They are empty statements that are unnecessary and make your writing seem wishy-washy.

*NOTE: For every CD in an answer, there should be at least one sentence of CM. This is called chunking. In HS you will need two sentences of CM for every SD.*

**Concluding (or Closing) Sentence (CS)** – One or two sentences which wrap up the paragraph. Commentary is a good way to end a paragraph as long as it gives the paragraph a sense of finality. In an essay, the CS provides transition from one ¶ to the next.

*NOTE: Don't just echo the question again or write “These are reasons why . . . ” It doesn't show the reader any creativity or voice.*