

A Great Paragraph

A great paragraph has a few important parts:

1.) A **main idea** that controls what is in the paragraph

2.) A **topic sentence** that states the main idea

3.) **Supporting details** that expand, explain, and give examples that make the main idea stronger

4.) **A conclusion**: a sentence or two at the end of the paragraph that says how the supporting details support or expand the main idea. A **good** conclusion makes a clear connection between the main idea and the importance of the supporting details. A good concluding sentence can also connect that paragraph to the next paragraph.

**Example 1**

Read the following example paragraph about food in Taiwan

Words to know:

Cuisine – a style of food or cooking that is unique to a country or region

Oyster – a sea animal that lives in a shell

Staple food – a type of food that many people from one country eat often

Omelets – egg mixture that is cooked flat and then folded in half

Street food - food sold on the streets

Taiwan’s coastal geography affects Taiwanese cuisine. Taiwan is an island, and fishing has traditionally supplied a lot of fresh fish and seafood. Oysters are an especially common ingredient in Taiwanese food. They appear in meals such as oyster omelets and oyster noodles, both of which are popular street foods. The availability of shellfish makes them a staple in Taiwanese cuisine. Also popular are sticks that have grilled squid on them, often sold by street food sellers. As an island nation, Taiwan treats seafood not as an occasional treat but as an everyday snack.

Write down the topic sentence:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How many sentences talk about Taiwanese cuisine? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How many sentences talk about Taiwan’s geography (being an island, having lots of coastline)?\_\_\_\_\_\_

Write down the concluding sentence from the paragraph:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Write down three supporting details that give **more examples** of the seafood that Taiwanese people usually eat:

1.)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2.)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3.)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What would be a good title for this paragraph? Try writing one. Tell the reader what they will read using as FEW words as possible:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Example 2**

(Adapted from: <http://lrs.ed.uiuc.edu/students/fwalters/essaybasic.html>)

Words to know:

Explorers – people who travel to places far away

Wagons – Large wooden carts pulled by horses or oxen (a type of cow)

Risk – doing something even though it could go wrong

Throughout human history, the physical geography of the world has often been dangerous for explorers, but they have not stopped exploring. In the beginning, when early humans left their tribal villages to search for food and water, they risked death or injury from dangerous animals and cold weather. Later, when modern humans sailed across the oceans looking for new land, many died in terrible storms. Even a skilled sailor could not win against the dangers of the ocean and the storms. More recently, in the 1800’s, people in the United States started traveling west in wagons. Crossing the mountain ranges and rivers was often too dangerous. Many died because their wagons got stuck in the mountains. Humans have never stopped exploring the world, even though its physical geography is so dangerous. Now, humans are looking to outer space as the next place to explore, even though the physical geography of space can be deadly.

Circle your answer.

The paragraph is ***mainly*** about:

1. Humans exploring the earth
2. Life on earth is dangerous and we should all stay home
3. Humans will explore outer space
4. The geography of the earth is dangerous for people who explore

Write down the topic sentence from the paragraph:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Write down a concluding sentence you found:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Write down three examples from the paragraph of the how the world’s geography can be dangerous for humans:

1.)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2.)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3.)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What would be a good title for this paragraph? Try writing one. Tell the reader what they will read using as FEW words as possible:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_