

CHAPTER 1

DESCRIBING PEOPLE

OBJECTIVES

Writers need certain skills.

In this chapter, you will learn to:

- Use questions and note taking to get ideas for writing
- Identify the three parts of a paragraph
- Use correct paragraph format
- Recognize subjects, verbs, and objects in complete sentences
- Use six rules of capitalization
- Work with simple sentences
- Write, revise, and edit a paragraph describing a person



Each person in a family is unique. Can you think of a different word to describe each person in this family?

- © Use your questions from Part B to interview a classmate. Take notes. Ask more questions to clarify spelling and other information. You will use this information in the Try It Out! activity on page 13.

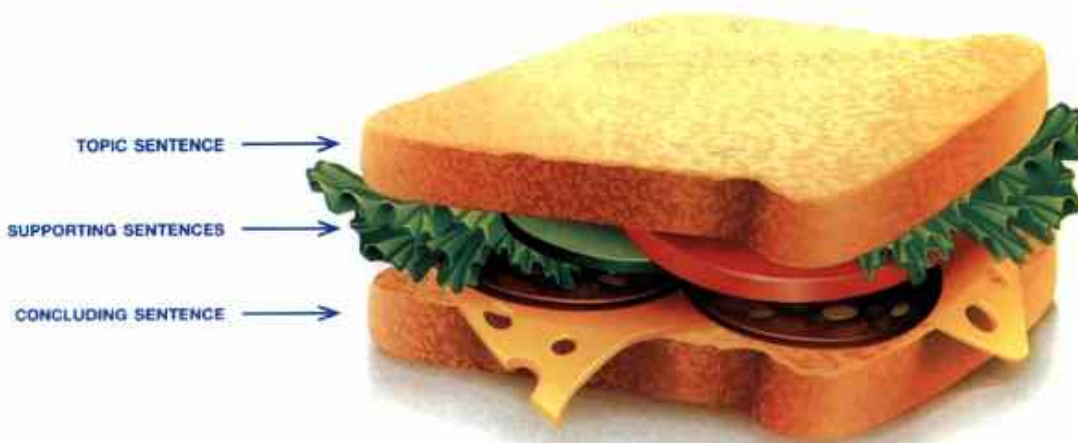
<i>What is your name?</i>	<i>Santy Valverde</i>
<i>Where are you from?</i>	<i>Michoacán, Mexico</i>

ORGANIZATION

A **paragraph** is a group of related sentences about a single topic. The topic of a paragraph contains one, and only one, idea. A paragraph has three main parts and they appear in this order:


- The **topic sentence** names the topic and tells what the paragraph will say about it. This sentence is usually the first sentence in a paragraph.
- The middle sentences in a paragraph are called the **supporting sentences** or **the body**. Supporting sentences give examples or other details about the topic. In some cases, they might even tell a story to illustrate the topic sentence.
- The last sentence in a paragraph is usually the **concluding sentence**. The concluding sentence often restates the topic sentence in different words or summarizes the main points.

A paragraph is like a sandwich: two pieces of bread (the topic and concluding sentences) holding the key ingredients (the supporting sentences).



The writing models describe two people. Writing Model 1 is about a teacher, and Writing Model 2 is about someone's best friend.

Work with a partner or in a small group. Read the models. Then answer the questions.

 **Writing Model 1**

Mrs. Robinson

Mrs. Robinson, my first grade teacher, was an important person in my life. I was only six years old, but she taught me a valuable life lesson. In the schools in my country, children usually learn to print before they learn to write in cursive script (like handwriting). Mrs. Robinson didn't believe in printing. She thought it was a waste of time. She taught us to write in cursive script from the first day. At first it was hard, and she made us practice a lot. That made me angry because I wasn't very good at it. I remember filling entire pages just with capital Os. I didn't think I could ever learn to write beautifully, but Mrs. Robinson was patient with me and told me to keep trying. At the end of the year, I felt very grown up because I could write in cursive script. I was proud of my new skill. Mrs. Robinson was important to me because she taught me the value of hard work.

Questions about the Model

1. Which sentence gives more information: the topic sentence or the concluding sentence?
2. How many supporting sentences does the paragraph have? How do they support the topic sentence: Do they give examples, or do they tell a story?

FORMATTING THE PAGE

As you saw on page 4, a well-organized paragraph needs to have a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence. In addition, it needs to use correct paragraph format. In this section, you will learn about correct paragraph format, and then you will use it in a short writing activity.

In academic writing, instructors require students to use correct format for paragraphs. Look at the guidelines and models for handwritten and computer-written work. Your instructor may have other requirements, so be sure to follow them.

Page Format for Handwritten Work

The Paper

Use 8½-inch-by-11-inch lined paper with three holes. The holes should be on your left side as you write. Write on one side of the paper only.

The Ink

Use black or dark blue ink only. Do not use pencil.

The Heading

Write your full name in the upper left corner in the wide, unlined area at the top of the page. Under it, write the course name and number. Below that, write the date the assignment is due in the order month-day-year, with a comma after the day.

The Title

Center the title of your paragraph on the first line.

The Paragraph

Skip one line, and start your paragraph on the third line. Remember to indent the first word about ½ inch from the left margin. (*Indent* means to leave some space at the beginning of the line.)

Margins

Leave a 1-inch margin on the left and right sides of the paper. Also leave a 1-inch margin at the bottom of the page. Your teacher may use these empty spaces to write comments to you.

Spacing

Leave a blank line between each line of writing. You and your teacher can use this space for corrections, comments, and revisions.

YOUR NAME → Anh Nguyen
 COURSE NUMBER → English 50
 DUE DATE → April 15, 20__

MARGIN

CENTER TITLE → My Classmate

INDENT THE FIRST SENTENCE → My classmate Santy Valverde is an interesting person.

SKIP LINES →
 She comes from Michoacán, a small city in the western part
 of Mexico. She arrived in this country two years ago. She is
 single and lives with her best friend Anna from Mexico.

MARGIN →
 They grew up in the same neighborhood in Michoacán, and
 their friendship has lasted 16 years so far. This semester

Santy is studying art, English, and computer science. After
 school, she and her roommate work in a restaurant as
 waitresses. Santy likes her job very much. On weekends, she
 often goes to the gym or plays volleyball with her friends.

She plans to become a website designer. Santy has a busy
 life, and she seems to have a bright future ahead of her.