PARAGRAPH BASICS

Paragraph Structure: A paragraph consists of several sentences that focus on one main idea. There are three main parts of a paragraph:

1. Topic sentence
2. Body sentences
3. Conclusion sentence

Topic sentence:

- Generally, the topic sentence is at the beginning of the paragraph. However, it can be at the end or even somewhere in the middle.
- Also, the topic sentence is the most general sentence in the paragraph. This means that there are not many details in the sentence.
- One idea is expressed in a broad scope.

Body sentences:

- These sentences support the topic sentence.
- There are two types of body sentences:
  - Major points: These sentences support the topic sentence by giving some explanation about the topic. These may have details, but not as specific as a fact. Often they begin with transitional words.
  - Minor details: These sentences also support the topic through specific information, description, and answer questions like why, how, when, where, and what. Often the sentences include facts, statistics, and experiences.

Conclusion sentence: This is a sentence that summarizes the information in the paragraph.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR AN EFFECTIVE PARAGRAPH:

UNITY: All the sentences in the paragraph should focus on the topic. Each paragraph has ONE TOPIC, so ALL sentences offer support for that one topic.

TRANSITIONS: These words help the flow of the paragraph. It also helps keep sentences on the topic.

LANGUAGE: For academic writing, sometimes the writer uses slang or abbreviations, which are too informal. Avoid using contractions like don’t, I’m, you’re, won’t.

WORDINESS: Writing long phrases too many times in an essay or even using long phrases in a paragraph often weakens the power of the message being given.

EDIT / REVISE: This is important. Take time to proof read and edit grammar and punctuation errors.

TAKE PLENTY OF TIME: Do not procrastinate. Get started.