

Writing Paragraphs

Grade 4

Table of Contents

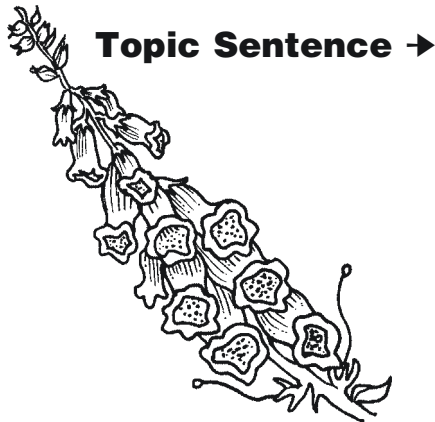
Plant Power! (Topic sentences)	1	Bookends (Introductions and conclusions)	12
Stormy Weather (Paragraph topics)	2	The End (Writing conclusions)	13
One Hump or Two? (Paragraph organization)	3	I Love My Dog! (Revising for sentence fluency)	14
From Notes to Sentences (Writing a paragraph)	4	Really, Really, Really (Revising for word choice)	15
Cafe Italiano (Narrative paragraphs)	5	What Did You Forget? (Proofreading—Missing or extra words)	16
So Innocent! (Descriptive paragraphs)	6	Sunset Silhouettes (Proofreading—Spelling)	17
Follow These Steps (Expository paragraphs)	7	The Soldier with a Secret (Proofreading—Mechanics)	18
Dear Editor (Persuasive paragraphs)	8	A Mixed-Up Mammal (Proofreading—Spelling/Mechanics)	19
Facts to Fiction (Writing paragraphs)	9	Paragraph Writing Checklist (Writing process)	20
Dear Lucas (Multiple paragraphs)	10	Learning Extenders (Related Teaching Ideas)	21–22
I Want to Read On! (Introductory paragraphs)	11	Answer Key	23–24

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Plant Power!

A **paragraph** is a group of sentences written about the same topic. Some paragraphs begin with a topic sentence. The **topic sentence** tells the main idea of the paragraph. The other sentences give details about the topic.

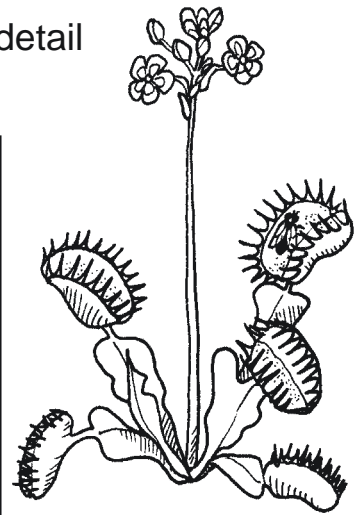


Topic Sentence →

Many drugs and medicines are made from plants. Leaves from the flowering plant foxglove contain digitalis. It is used to make heart medicine. For hundreds of years, Indians in South America used bark from the cinchona tree to treat fevers. Today the bark is used to make quinine, a drug for treating malaria.

These two paragraphs are missing topic sentences. Read the detail sentences. Then write a topic sentence for each paragraph.

They are called carnivorous plants. They eat insects because they do not get enough nutrients from the soil. One example is the Venus's-flytrap. It has leaves that snap shut like a trap when an insect lands on them. Once the plant has digested its meal, the leaves open again.



_____ This gigantic flower measures nearly three feet across. The Rafflesia grows in the forests of southeast Asia. It blooms once every 10 years. The Rafflesia may also be the stinkiest flower in the world. This strange-looking flower smells like rotten meat. Flies are attracted by the Rafflesia's smell and they swarm the giant flower and pollinate it.

Try This! Think of facts you know about a plant. Write a matching topic sentence.

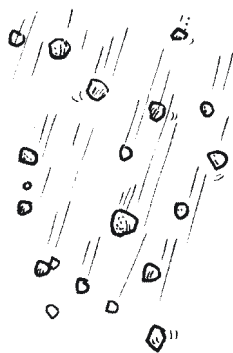
Stormy Weather

The sentences in a paragraph should all be about the same topic. Read each paragraph below. Underline the topic sentence. It is often, but not always, the first sentence. Cross out the sentence in each paragraph that doesn't belong.



A hurricane is a huge spinning storm that forms over a warm ocean. The Pacific Ocean is the largest ocean in the world. A hurricane can be 300 miles wide. It swirls around the eye, a calm area in the center of the storm. When hurricanes reach land, they bring high winds, heavy rain, and huge waves. Some hurricanes have caused massive flooding, killing thousands of people.

If you hear what sounds like a train roaring straight towards your home, take cover! It may be a tornado. Tornadoes are the most violent storms on Earth. These powerful windstorms can spin at speeds of up to 300 miles per hour. Winds on the planet Saturn can blow up to 1,000 miles per hour! Tornadoes can destroy everything in their path, flattening homes and lifting up trees and cars.



Hail is a type of icy precipitation that falls from the sky during a thunderstorm. Hail can occur even on warm days. It is formed high up in the atmosphere. Tiny frozen bits of ice collide with cold water droplets. The water freezes and makes another layer of ice. The hailstone is bounced up and down in the clouds, forming new layers of ice. Finally, when it becomes too heavy, it falls to earth. Snow is another form of precipitation.

Superstar! Find and copy a topic sentence from a paragraph in an encyclopedia.