

# The Three Parts of a Paragraph: Supporting Sentences

9<sup>th</sup> Lecture

## The Three Parts of a Paragraph: Supporting Sentences

**Supporting sentences** develop the topic sentence. That is, they explain or prove the topic sentence by giving more information about it. Following are some of the supporting sentences that explain the topic sentence about gold.

First of all, gold has a lustrous beauty that is resistant to corrosion.

For example, a Macedonian coin remains as untarnished today as the day it was made 25 centuries ago.

Another important characteristic of gold is its usefulness to industry and science.

The most recent use of gold is in astronauts' suits.



## Gold

<sup>1</sup>Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics. <sup>2</sup>First of all, gold has a lustrous<sup>1</sup> beauty that is resistant to corrosion.<sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup>Therefore, it is suitable for jewelry, coins, and ornamental purposes. <sup>4</sup>Gold never needs to be polished and will remain beautiful forever. <sup>5</sup>For example, a Macedonian coin remains as untarnished<sup>3</sup> today as the day it was made 25 centuries ago. <sup>6</sup>Another important characteristic of gold is its usefulness to industry and science. <sup>7</sup>For many years, it has been used in hundreds of industrial applications, such as photography and dentistry. <sup>8</sup>The most recent use of gold is in astronauts' suits. <sup>9</sup>Astronauts wear gold-plated heat shields for protection when they go outside spaceships in space. <sup>10</sup>In conclusion, gold is treasured not only for its beauty but also for its utility.

# *A Discussion Question*

**In writing, what are the characteristics of the Supporting Sentences?**

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

**Remember:** A good paragraph has a topic sentence that states clearly what the main idea of the paragraph is.

In addition, a paragraph should have **supporting details**—that is, information that provides support for, and is clearly tied to, the topic sentence.

**Be careful!** If a detail doesn't support the topic sentence or isn't tied to it clearly, then it may not belong in the paragraph.

In the writing model to the right, the topic sentence of the paragraph is highlighted in yellow. The sentences that follow are details. Two of the sentences are crossed out because they do not support the topic sentence and should not be included in the paragraph. These two sentences do not provide information about the chair and do not indicate why the writer likes the chair. The remaining sentences are supporting details—they all support the topic sentence and are clearly tied to it. They provide more information about the chair and they explain why the writer likes the chair.

In my living room, I have many things.  
My favorite possession is an old wooden chair. My parents gave it to me when I left home. ~~A wooden chair can be very expensive if it is an antique.~~ It has lots of memories for me because it was in my parent's bedroom when I was growing up. ~~It's important to take very good care of wooden furniture.~~ The chair is very comfortable, and I used to sit in it a lot as a child.



**Read each topic sentence. Circle the detail that does not support the topic sentence.**

- 1 Many French artists in the nineteenth century were influenced by Japanese art and printmaking.
  - a Today, the work of Hokusai, Japan's most famous printmaker, is popular in Western countries.
  - b Looking at the work of the French impressionists, it is clear that they chose to imitate the Japanese artistic styles of the time.
  - c A number of French artists had collections of Japanese art.
- 2 I love my poster of Reinaldo, the Brazilian soccer star, but my wife hates it.
  - a I think Reinaldo is the greatest player in the world.
  - b My wife doesn't think I should keep it in our bedroom.
  - c Reinaldo is a right-footed soccer player.
- 3 Rodin's statue, *The Thinker*, is probably one of the most famous sculptures in the world.
  - a This metal and stone sculpture of a man deep in thought is recognized all over the world.
  - b Rodin was born on November 12, 1840.
  - c The image of *The Thinker* can be seen in popular art and advertisements.
- 4 On a side table in my dining room, I have two small ceramic figures of lions from my trip to Taipei.
  - a They have beautiful colors including red, green, blue, and yellow.
  - b You should visit the National Palace Museum when you are in Taipei.
  - c I bought them together from a small shop at a temple I was visiting.
- 5 My sister has always shown a lot of talent in the performing arts.
  - a We've had our differences and we haven't always agreed on everything.
  - b She has acted in school plays since she was about ten years old.
  - c I think she's going to follow a career as an actor or dancer.
- 6 I think artistic talent is something you're born with.
  - a I've tried many times to improve my ability at drawing, but it hasn't worked.
  - b I have friends who are very talented in art, but they've never taken any special classes.
  - c My aunt studied art at the Art Institute of Chicago for four years.

# Activity

Favorite object:

Topic sentence:

Details to support my topic sentence:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

The End