

GREAT WRITING

THIRD EDITION

Keith S. Folse, Elena Vestri Solomon,
and David Clabeaux

GREAT WRITING 3

From Great Paragraphs to Great Essays

THIRD EDITION

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***Great Writing 3: From Great Paragraphs
to Great Essays***

Third Edition

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Scope and Sequence

Unit	Writing	Grammar for Writing	Building Better Vocabulary	Original Student Writing
1 p. 2 INTRODUCTION TO PARAGRAPHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Is a Paragraph? • Topic Sentences • Supporting Sentences • Concluding Sentences • Four Features of a Well-Written Paragraph 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checking for Verbs and Fragments • Nouns and Noun Forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word Associations • Using Collocations 	<p>Original Student Writing: Write Your Own Paragraph</p> <p>Photo Topic: Write about a happy time in your life.</p> <p>Timed Writing Topic: Describe why you like a particular restaurant.</p>
2 p. 38 FIVE ELEMENTS OF GOOD WRITING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Makes a Good Paragraph? • Five Elements of Good Writing • Writing Purpose Statements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using Clear, Descriptive Language • Clear Pronoun Reference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word Associations • Using Collocations 	<p>Original Student Writing: Write Your Own Paragraph</p> <p>Photo Topic: Write a paragraph describing how to make something.</p> <p>Timed Writing Topic: Describe your favorite type of movie.</p>
3 p. 64 TYPES OF PARAGRAPHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of Paragraphs • Descriptive Paragraphs • Comparison Paragraphs • Cause-Effect Paragraphs • Classification Paragraphs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject-Verb Agreement • Word Forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word Associations • Using Collocations 	<p>Original Student Writing: Write Your Own Paragraph</p> <p>Photo Topic: Write about learning something new.</p> <p>Timed Writing Topic: Classify the four different types of paragraphs that are explained in this unit.</p>

Unit	Writing	Grammar for Writing	Building Better Vocabulary	Original Student Writing
4 p. 90 DESCRIPTIVE ESSAYS: MOVING FROM PARAGRAPH TO ESSAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing Paragraph Basics Descriptive Paragraphs and Essays Understanding the Writing Process: The Seven Steps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describing with the Five Senses Using Prepositions of Location to Describe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Word Associations Using Collocations 	<p>Original Student Writing: Write a descriptive essay.</p> <p>Photo Topic: Describe the perfect place to relax.</p> <p>Timed Writing Topic: Write a description of the perfect place to study.</p>
5 p. 114 COMPARISON ESSAYS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization of a Comparison Essay Example Comparison Essay Outline of a Comparison Essay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognizing Word Forms and Common Suffixes Forming the Comparative and Superlative of Adjectives and Adverbs Parallel Structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Word Associations Using Collocations 	<p>Original Student Writing: Write a comparison essay.</p> <p>Photo Topic: Compare a place before and after a major event.</p> <p>Timed Writing Topic: Compare two stressful jobs.</p>
6 p. 138 CAUSE-EFFECT ESSAYS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization of a Cause-Effect Essay Example Cause-Effect Essay Outline of a Cause-Effect Essay Working with Language in a Cause-Effect Essay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common Cause-Effect Structures Ways of Expressing Past Actions Preposition Combinations with Nouns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Word Associations Using Collocations 	<p>Original Student Writing: Write a cause-effect essay.</p> <p>Photo Topic: Write about the effects of an environmental phenomenon.</p> <p>Timed Writing Topic: Why do some people avoid getting involved in politics?</p>
7 p. 164 CLASSIFICATION ESSAYS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization of a Classification Essay Example Cause-Effect Essay Outline of a Classification Essay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connectors and Transitions The Passive Voice Using Adjective Clauses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Word Associations Using Collocations 	<p>Original Student Writing: Write a classification essay.</p> <p>Photo Topic: Write a classification essay about things found in nature.</p> <p>Timed Writing Topic: Classify types of television programs.</p>

Overview

Framed by engaging **National Geographic** images, the new edition of the *Great Writing* series helps students write better sentences, paragraphs, and essays. The new *Foundations* level meets the needs of low-level learners through practice in basic grammar, vocabulary, and spelling, while all levels feature clear explanations, student writing models, and meaningful practice opportunities. The new edition of the *Great Writing* series is perfect for beginning to advanced learners, helping them develop and master academic writing skills.

Great Writing: Foundations focuses on basic sentence construction, emphasizing grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and composition.

Great Writing 1 focuses on sentences as they appear in paragraphs.

Great Writing 2 teaches paragraph development.

Great Writing 3 transitions from paragraphs to essays.

Great Writing 4 focuses on essays.

Great Writing 5 practices more advanced essays.

The earliest ESL composition textbooks were merely extensions of ESL grammar classes. The activities in these books did not practice English composition as much as ESL grammar points. Later books, on the other hand, tended to focus too much on the composing process. We feel that this focus ignores the important fact that the real goal for English learners is both to produce a presentable product and to understand the composing process. From our years of ESL and other L2 teaching experience, we believe that the *Great Writing* series allows English learners to achieve this goal.

Great Writing 3: From Great Paragraphs to Great Essays is the fourth book in the six-level *Great Writing* series of composition books. *Great Writing 3* reviews the basic elements of paragraphs, shows the connections between these paragraphs and longer essays, and introduces students to essay writing using various rhetorical patterns. This text contains extensive practical exercises and activities in both paragraph and essay writing at the high-intermediate level. It contains a wide variety of exercises that offer practice in both working with the writing process and developing a final written product. We assume that students understand the basics of paragraph writing and can move on to the creation of original essays.

There are as many ways to write essays as there are writers. Writing reflects a writer's knowledge of essay conventions as much as it reflects the writer's creativity and background knowledge. Thus, writing is both a science and an art. Since no art form can be "taught" precisely, this book offers models of good academic paragraphs and essays. We realize that some students may not go beyond the level of the examples, whereas other students may advance in their essay writing.

This latest edition of *Great Writing 3* includes a wide array of writing activities representing varying approaches to the teaching of writing. Although we realize that few writing teachers are completely satisfied with any writing text, we believe that within this large variety of activities and approaches, most teachers will find what their students need to improve writing skills. The text is also presented in a way that is compatible with how teachers think ESL writing ought to be taught. New to this edition are targeted grammar points to enhance students' accuracy in sentence writing.

This book is designed for high-intermediate students. Depending on the class level and the amount of writing that is done outside of class hours, there is enough material for 60 to 80 classroom hours. Provided that enough writing is done outside of the classroom, the number of hours can be as little as 40.

The best judge of which units and which activities should be covered with any group of students is always the teacher. After you gauge the needs of your students, you can match these needs with the material in this book.

Organization

In *Great Writing 3*, Units 1–3 deal with the elements of a good paragraph. Unit 1 presents the elements of a paragraph and offers some specific suggestions for writing a paragraph, including how to write a good topic sentence, supporting details, and concluding sentences. Unit 2 walks students through the elements of good writing, including cohesion and audience. Unit 3 exposes students to different rhetorical styles of academic writing using paragraphs as the sample elements. Unit 4 takes the student from a paragraph to an essay. Units 5–7 focus on comparison, cause-effect, and classification essays respectively. While it is not necessary to cover these last three units in the given order, the current sequencing will allow for some recycling of grammatical and lexical items. The *Brief Writer's Handbook with Activities* and the *Appendices* contain additional practice material to support both the process and the mechanics of writing.

Contents of a Unit

Although each unit has specific writing objectives (listed at the beginning of the unit), the following features appear in every unit:

Example Paragraphs and/or Essays

Because we believe that writing and reading are inextricably related, *Great Writing 3* offers 33 example paragraphs and 9 model essays. Each presents a rhetorical mode and/or provides editing activities. Many models are preceded by schema-building questions and followed by questions about organization, syntactic structures, or other composition features. New, potentially unfamiliar vocabulary words are glossed next to each paragraph. These words can provide students with a list of vocabulary to add to a separate vocabulary notebook.

Grammar for Writing

Since good writing requires a working knowledge of the mechanics of English, *Great Writing* includes clear charts or detailed instruction that relates directly to the writing assignments. In addition, numerous activities give students the opportunity to practice and refine their grammar and writing knowledge and skills.

Activities

The new third edition contains 118 activities, numerous suggestions for additional essay writing assignments, and 28 supplemental activities in *The Brief Writer's Handbook with Activities*. These writing, grammar, and vocabulary activities gradually build the skills students need to write well-crafted essays and provide learners with more input in English composition and paragraph organization and cohesion. To this end, the activities in this book deal with elements that affect the quality of a written product, including grammar, organization, and logic. Although in this text there is information about both process and product in essay writing, it should be noted that the focus is slightly more on the final written product.

Building Better Vocabulary

Each unit includes two vocabulary activities to build schema and collocations. In the first activity, *Word Associations*, the students identify words that best relate to the target vocabulary word. This allows them to build connections to more words and thus grow their vocabulary more quickly. Words from the Academic Word List are starred (see pages 224–225 for the complete list). The second

activity, *Using Collocations*, helps students learn specific word combinations, or collocations, which will improve their writing. It is helpful to encourage students to use these new words in their Original Student Writing assignment and to add them to a vocabulary notebook.

Writer's Notes

Great Writing 3 features writing advice that helps writers to better understand use and format.

Building Better Sentences

Periodically in each unit, students are asked to turn to Appendix 1 and work on building better sentences. Each practice is intentionally short and includes only three problems. In each problem, there are three to five short sentences that the students must combine into a single sentence that expresses all the ideas in a logical and grammatically correct manner.

Original Writing

Each unit includes an activity that requires students to do some form of writing. Original Student Writing includes writing prompts and a set of directions to encourage students to follow the writing process and refer back to the lessons taught in the unit.

Additional Writing Topics gives students the opportunity to continue practicing their writing skills. The first topic always links back to the opening photograph and writing prompt. The teacher can decide whether all students will write about the same topic or whether each student is free to choose any of the topics listed.

Peer Editing

At the end of each unit, a peer editing activity offers students the opportunity to provide written comments to one another with the goal of improving their essays. A unique peer editing sheet for each unit can be found online at NGL.Cengage.com/GW3 and each one provides the guidance and structure that are necessary for students at this level to perform this task successfully. We recommend that students spend 15 to 20 minutes reading a classmate's essay and writing comments using the questions on the peer editing sheet.

Timed Writing

One way to improve students' comfort level with the task of writing under a deadline, such as during a testing situation, is to provide them with numerous writing opportunities that are timed. The final activity in each unit features a timed-writing prompt geared toward the grammar and sentence structure presented in that unit. Students are given five minutes to read the prompt and make a quick writing plan, followed by 40 minutes of actual writing. Instructors may use this activity at any time during the lesson.

What's New in This Edition?

- Engaging images from *National Geographic* connect learning to the greater world.
- New and updated paragraphs and essays act as springboards and models for writing.
- Updated Grammar for Writing sections clearly present grammar and help students learn the structures for writing.
- Streamlined instruction and practice activities offer step-by-step guidelines to focus writers on both the writing process and product.
- Words from the Academic Word List are highlighted in vocabulary activities, encouraging students to expand their word knowledge.

- The expanded *Brief Writer's Handbook with Activities* now includes a Useful Vocabulary for Better Writing section to help writers choose appropriate language for the different rhetorical modes.
- An all-new level, *Great Writing: Foundations* introduces students to the basics of grammar, spelling, and vocabulary.
- A new Online Workbook encourages learners to further practice grammar, vocabulary, and editing skills. Students can also write paragraphs or essays, and submit them to the instructor electronically.
- An updated Presentation Tool allows instructors to use the book in an interactive whiteboard setting and demonstrate the editing process.
- An eBook provides another option to use *Great Writing* in a traditional or blended learning environment.

Ancillary Components

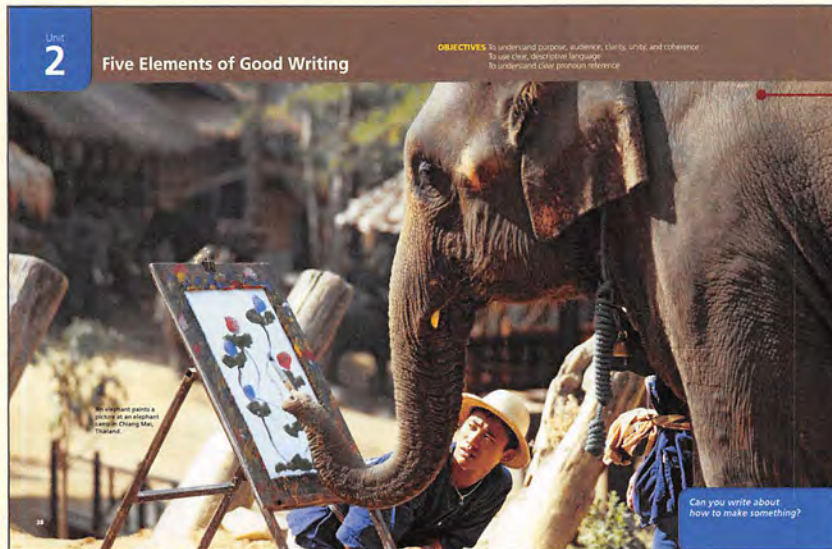
In addition to the *Great Writing 3: From Great Paragraphs to Great Essays* Student Book, the following components help both the instructor and the students expand their teaching and learning.

- **Online Workbook:** Includes a wealth of vocabulary, grammar, writing, and editing practice with immediate feedback.
- **Presentation Tool CD-ROM:** Offers instructors the ability to lead whole-class presentations and demonstrate the editing process.
- **Assessment CD-ROM with ExamView®:** Allows instructors to create and customize tests.
- **Teacher Companion Site at NGL.Cengage.com/GW3:** Provides teachers with answer keys, peer editing sheets, and teacher's notes.
- **Student Companion Site at NGL.Cengage.com/GW3:** Provides students with peer editing sheets, glossary, and interactive flashcards.
- **eBook:** Offers an interactive option.

Inside a Unit

Great Writing 3: From Great Paragraphs to Great Essays

Framed by engaging **National Geographic** images, the new edition of the *Great Writing* series helps students write better sentences, paragraphs, and essays. The new *Foundations* level meets the needs of low-level learners through practice in basic grammar, vocabulary, and spelling, while all levels feature clear explanations, student writing models, and meaningful practice opportunities. The new edition of the *Great Writing* series is perfect for beginning to advanced learners, helping them develop and master academic writing skills.



Impactful **National Geographic** images provide an engaging foundation for student writing.

Sample Writing Models focus on specific writing skills and rhetorical modes.

Vocabulary words are glossed to encourage independent mastery of new terms.

ACTIVITY 18 Analyzing the Features of a Paragraph
Discuss the Preview Questions with a classmate. Then, read the paragraph and answer the questions that follow.

Preview Questions

1. What do you know about professional cycling?
2. Do you know of any recent problems in the sport?

Paragraph 7

The Dark Side of Cycling

The illegal drug use that has **plagued** the world of professional cycling for decades must be stopped. Certain drugs help cyclists ride faster and farther than normal. Some of the drugs work by increasing the number of red blood cells in the body. While the drugs might help the athletes to perform better, there can be terrible side effects. For example, in the year and a half before the 2004 Tour de France, nine professional cyclists died from **overdoses** of illegal drugs. Several professional baseball players in the United States have also been involved in similar drug **controversies**. Despite the danger, more and more cyclists are turning to these drugs to gain an advantage over their competition. It is unfortunate that these athletes value winning more than their lives.

to plague: to cause severe problems

an overdose: too much medicine or too many drugs

a controversy: a disagreement about an issue

Inside a Unit

Great Writing 3: From Great Paragraphs to Great Essays

Grammar for Writing

Using Clear, Descriptive Language

Using clear, descriptive language improves clarity in a paragraph. It helps the reader see accurately the person or thing the writer is describing. Avoid vague and unclear words, such as good and nice. Instead, choose clear and precise words.

Example	Explanation
At the 2012 Olympic Games in London, Usain Bolt of Jamaica broke his own Olympic record in the 100-meter dash. He is a good runner.	From word choice: great Good is vague. Great does not adequately describe an athlete who has won an Olympic medal.
At the 2012 Olympic Games in London, Usain Bolt of Jamaica broke his own Olympic record in the 100-meter dash. He is an exceptional runner.	From word choice: exceptional Exceptional is more precise. Exceptional tells the reader that Usain Bolt is more than a good runner.
At the 2012 Olympic Games in London, Usain Bolt of Jamaica broke his own Olympic record in the 100-meter dash. He is a stunning runner.	From word choice: stunning Stunning and descriptive words fit in this sentence: stunning, phenomenal, premier, unique

Adding adjectives or prepositional phrases can make your sentences more specific and descriptive to improve the clarity of your writing.

Original: The soldiers slowly crossed the river.

More specific: The soldiers slowly crossed the **dangerous** river.

The soldiers slowly crossed the river in the **dark**.

The soldiers slowly crossed the **dangerous** river in the **dark**.

The **stunned** soldiers slowly crossed the **dangerous** river in the **dark**.

ACTIVITY 10 **Choosing Clear and Precise Words**

Suggest three alternative words that are more descriptive or precise than the adjectives that are given. Use a dictionary or thesaurus to find appropriate adjectives.

1. good	wonderful	incredible	delightful
2. bad	horrible	terrible	awful
3. fun			
4. big			
5. small			
6. old			

New **Grammar for Writing** charts provide clear explanations and examples, giving learners easy access to the structures they will use in their writing.

Guided, structured activities help students practice writing, grammar, and editing skills.

Building Better Vocabulary activities highlight words from the Academic Word List and prompt students to apply and expand their vocabulary and knowledge of collocations.

Building Better Vocabulary

ACTIVITY 11 **Word Associations**

Circle the word or phrase that is most closely related to the word or phrase on the left. If necessary, use a dictionary to check the meaning of words you do not know.

1. up to 50	4	50 or 51
2. moral	in a book	on a wall
3. exceptional	very bad	very good
4. the pace	the quality	the speed
5. a blizzard	summer	winter
6. a genre	an idea	a type
7. impact*	cause	effect
8. outstanding	very good	very bad
9. mild	not extreme	not appropriate
10. even	crooked	parallel

8. in fun to spill sauce _____ your shirt

9. metal sharp / sharp metal a _____ edge

10. of / with I'm aware _____ the situation.

11. leading / presentation one of the _____ producers

12. decide / face to _____ the challenges of the future

13. employer / meal a perspective _____

14. for / in can help you _____ several ways

15. slowly / timely in a _____ fashion

Original Student Writing

ACTIVITY 21 **Writing Your Own Paragraph**

Choose one of the topic sentences from Activity 1, page 6, and develop it into a paragraph. Follow these guidelines:

- Indent the first sentence of your paragraph.
- Start with a topic sentence.
- Include a controlling idea in your topic sentence.
- Add supporting sentences that relate to the controlling idea in the topic sentence.
- End with a concluding sentence.
- Use at least two of the vocabulary words or phrases presented in Activities 20 and 21.
- Underline these words and phrases in your paragraph.
- Include the four features of a well-written paragraph from page 24.

If you need ideas for words and phrases, see the Useful Vocabulary for Better Writing on pages 226–228.

Original Student Writing gives students the chance to combine the grammar, vocabulary, and writing skills together in one writing piece.

Peer Editing activities increase students' awareness of common errors and help them become better writers and editors.

Timed Writing

How quickly can you write in English? There are many times when you must write quickly, such as on a test. It is important to feel comfortable during those times. Timed writing practice can make you feel better about writing quickly in English.

1. Take out a piece of paper.
2. Read the paragraph guidelines and the writing prompt.
3. Brainstorm ideas for five minutes.
4. Write a short paragraph (six to ten sentences).
5. You have 25 minutes to write your paragraph.

Paragraph Guidelines

- Remember to give your paragraph a title.
- Double-space your paragraph.
- Write as lightly as possible if you are not using a computer.
- Include a topic sentence that contains the main subject and a controlling idea.
- End your paragraph with a one-sentence conclusion.
- Try to give yourself a few minutes before the end of the activity to review your work. Check for spelling, verb tense, and subject-verb agreement mistakes.

Describe why you like a particular restaurant.

Timed Writing prepares students for success on standardized and high-stakes writing exams.

The **Brief Writer's Handbook with Activities** includes many resources for the developing writer, including a new **Useful Vocabulary for Writing** section.

Brief Writer's Handbook with Activities

Understanding the Writing Process: The Seven Steps 191

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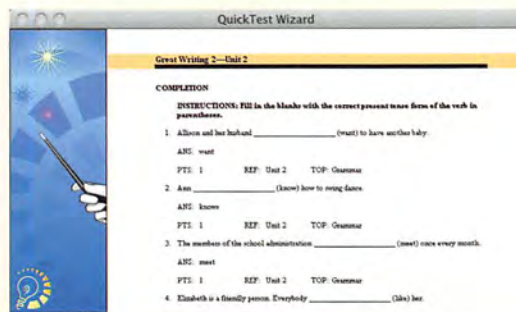
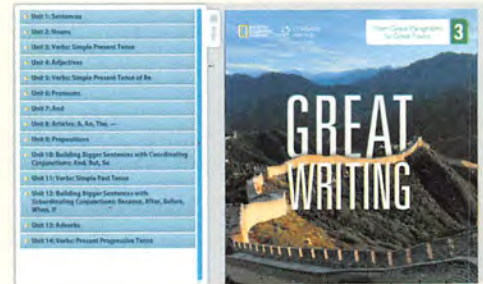
Technology

Great Writing 3: From Great Paragraphs to Great Essays

For Instructors:

The Presentation Tool CD-ROM contains time-saving, interactive activities from the student book, a set of whiteboard tools, and additional content to help the instructor guide learners through the editing process.

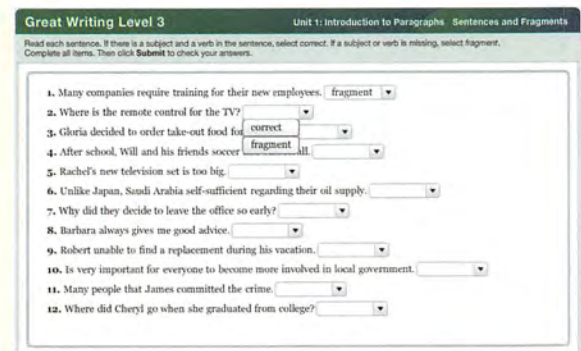
Teacher's Notes, Answer Keys, and Peer Editing Sheets are available online for instructors.



Assessment CD-ROM with ExamView® allows instructors to create and customize tests and quizzes easily.

For Students:

The Online Workbook: Each level features additional independent practice in vocabulary, grammar, writing, and editing.



Great Writing eBooks are available for all levels and are compatible with tablets, laptops, and smartphones.

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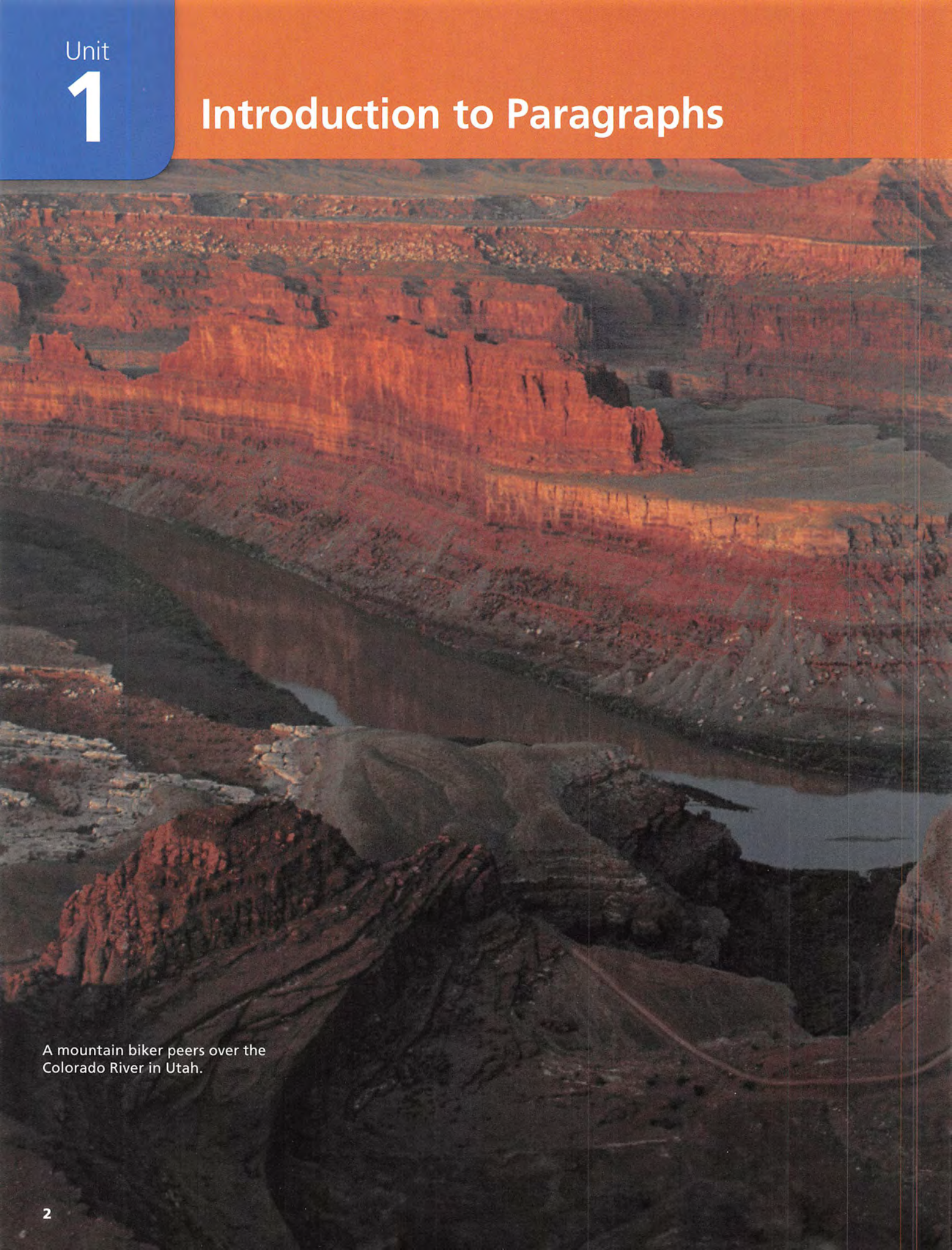
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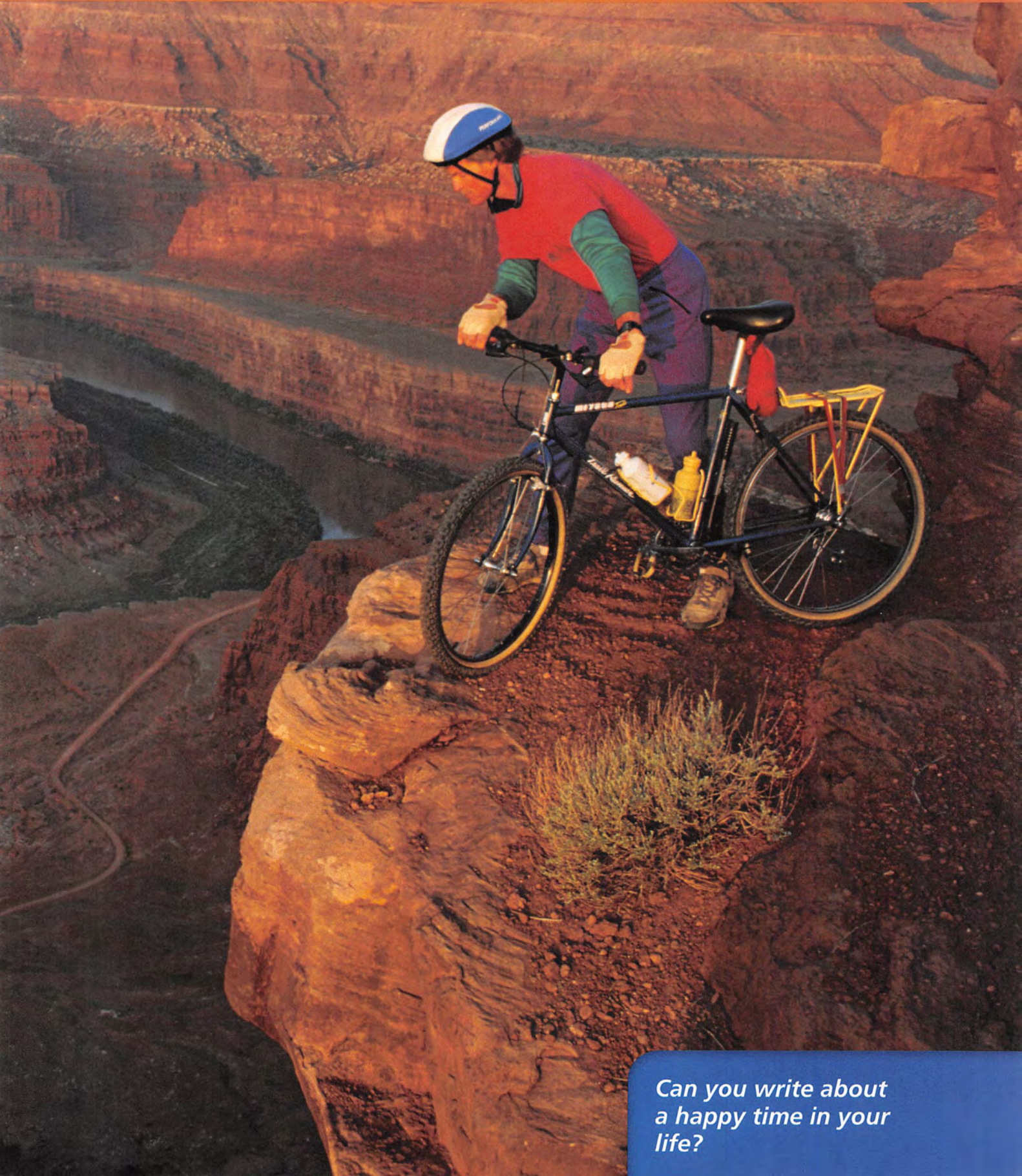
1

Introduction to Paragraphs



A mountain biker peers over the Colorado River in Utah.

OBJECTIVES To understand paragraph parts
To identify fragments
To understand nouns and noun forms



Can you write about a happy time in your life?

What Is a Paragraph?

A **paragraph** is a collection of sentences that describe, discuss, or explain one central idea. The three main parts of a paragraph are:

- the topic sentence
- the supporting detail sentences
- the concluding sentence

Every part has a specific function, and every part is important.

Topic Sentences

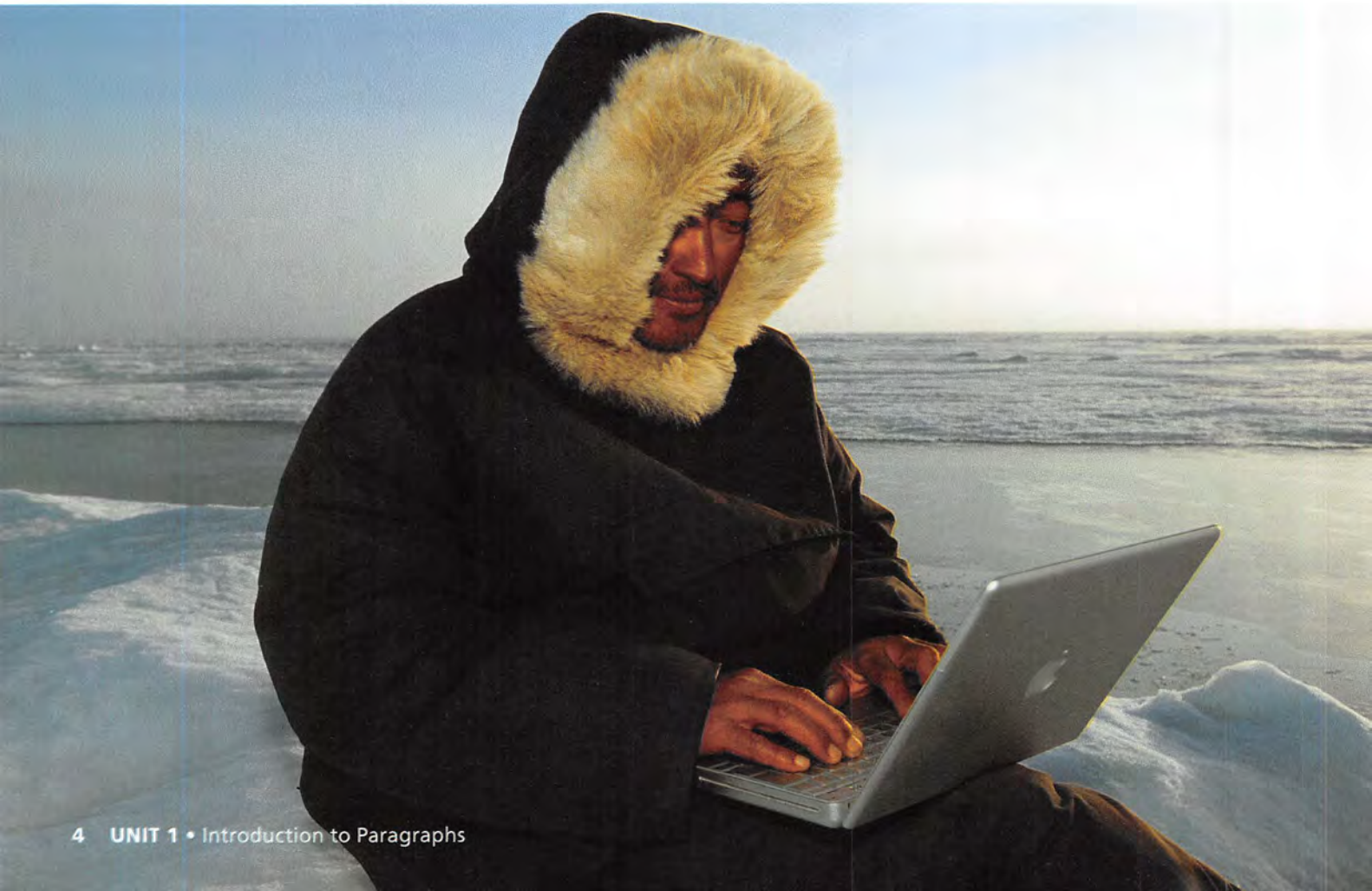
A **topic sentence** tells the reader the main idea or thought that the writer is trying to express. It is a one-sentence summary of the entire paragraph. Each sentence that follows helps to develop the idea presented in the topic sentence.

The organization of a paragraph is based on the topic sentence.

Elements of a Topic Sentence

The two main elements of a topic sentence are:

- the main subject
- a controlling idea



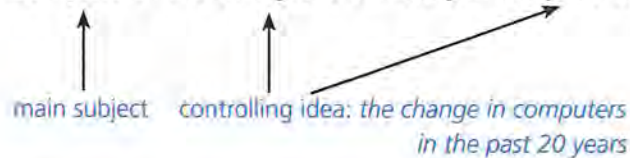
A topic sentence contains the **main subject** of the paragraph and a **controlling idea**. The controlling idea steers the main topic in the direction that the writer wants to take it. Study the following examples.

Topic sentence 1: **Computers** can be **used in many different situations**.



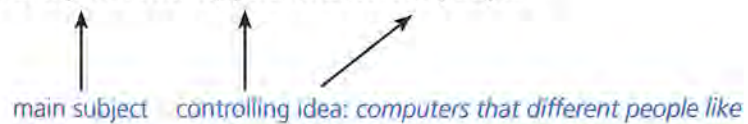
From this sentence, we know that the paragraph is going to discuss something about computers (main subject). Specifically, it will explain how people use computers in different situations (controlling idea).

Topic sentence 2: **Computers** have **changed** enormously **in the past 20 years**.



From this topic sentence, we know that the paragraph is going to explain how computers have changed over time.

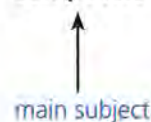
Topic sentence 3: Different **computers** can **appeal** to **different people**.



From this topic sentence, we know that the paragraph is going to explain how different kinds of people like different computers.

Now look at the next example.

Topic sentence 4: **Computers** were invented in the twentieth century.

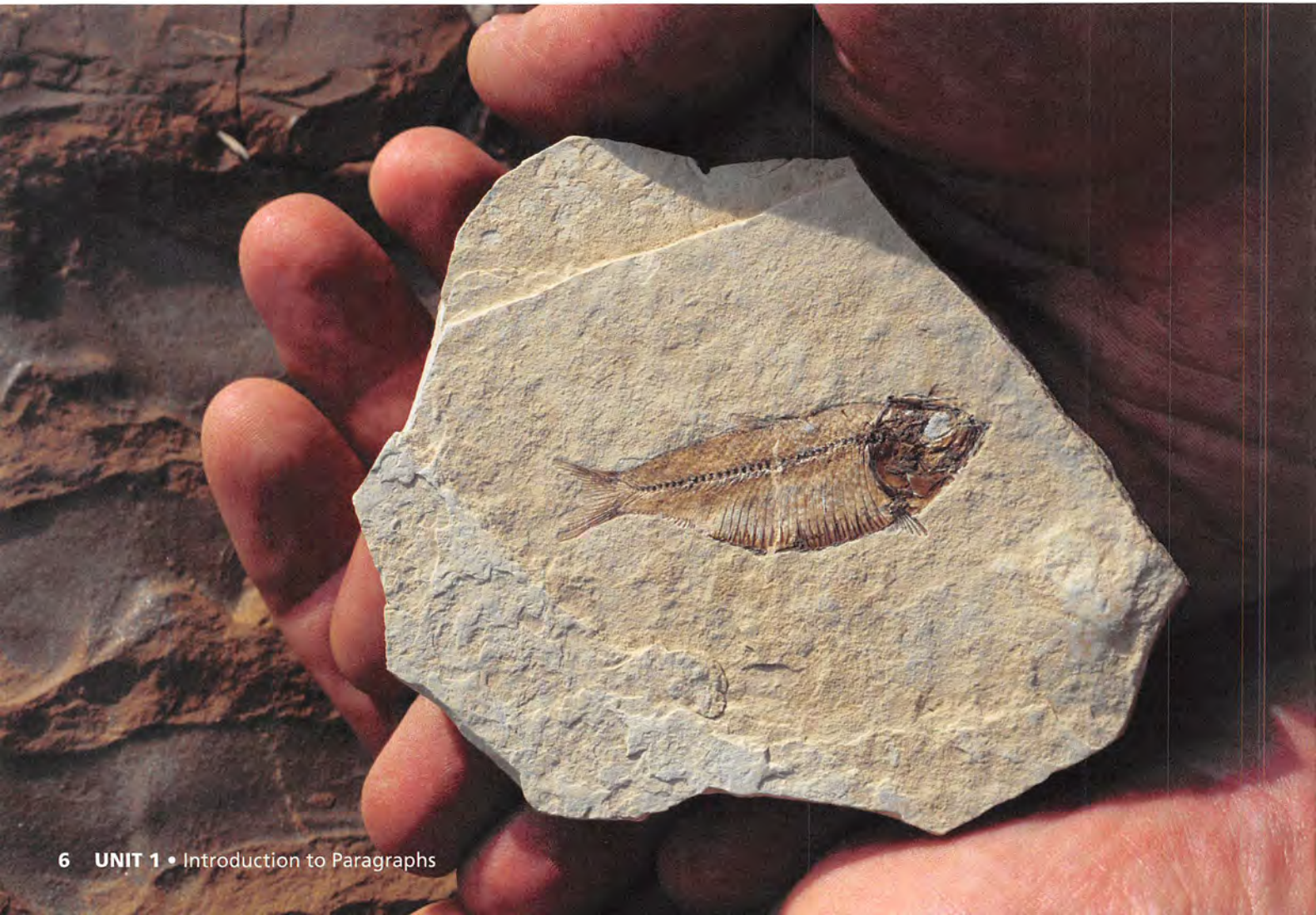


In this sentence, the information is a simple fact. There is not a good controlling idea that a writer can discuss in a paragraph. This is not a good topic sentence because it does not indicate that there is anything more to say about the topic.

ACTIVITY 1 Selecting a Good Topic Sentence

In each pair of sentences, put a check mark (✓) next to the better topic sentence. Be prepared to explain your choices.

1. _____ a. Bilingual dictionaries can help non-native learners in two very important ways.
_____ b. In a bilingual dictionary, the information is presented in two different languages.
2. _____ a. A person who is interviewing for a job has to arrive on time to the interview.
_____ b. A person who is interviewing for a job has to do three important things during the interview.
3. _____ a. There are many theories about who killed John F. Kennedy.
_____ b. John F. Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963.
4. _____ a. Smartphones have a number of useful features.
_____ b. Smartphones use touch screen technology.
5. _____ a. Fossils are the remains of plants or animals that died a long time ago.
_____ b. There are numerous techniques that scientists use to discover the age of a fossil.



ACTIVITY 2 Studying Topic Sentences in a Paragraph

Discuss the Preview Questions with a classmate. Then, read the paragraph and answer the questions that follow.

Preview Questions

1. Have you ever had a flat tire on your car?
2. What did you do?

Paragraph 1

Changing a Tire on Your Car

There are many steps in changing a tire on your car. Before you get started, make sure you have the following items: a **jack**, a **lug nut wrench**, and a **spare** tire. First, use the jack to **elevate** the car off the ground. This may require some **strength** because cars are very heavy. Using the lug nut wrench, remove all of the lug nuts from the wheel. This will probably be the most difficult step because some of the lug nuts may be **stuck**. After you have taken off the lug nuts, remove the flat tire and replace it with your spare tire. **Screw** the lug nuts back onto the wheel and **make sure** that they are **tightly fastened**. Finally, lower the car back down to the ground. Check one last time to make sure that the nuts are as tight as possible. Following these steps will have you back on the road **in no time**.

a jack: a tool that is used to raise a car in order to remove a tire

a lug nut wrench: a tool that is used to take the bolts off a car wheel

spare: extra

to elevate: to raise

the strength: power (the noun form of the adjective *strong*)

to be stuck: to be unable to move (past participle of the verb *stick*)

to screw: to twist

to make sure: to check that something is how it should be

tightly: securely (opposite of *loosely*)

fastened: attached

in no time: very quickly

Post-Reading

1. Put a check mark (✓) next to the statement that tells the purpose of the paragraph.
_____ a. To tell the importance of a tire on a car
_____ b. To show how to change the oil in a car
_____ c. To tell why it is important to carry a spare tire
_____ d. To show how to change a flat tire
2. Underline the topic sentence.
3. According to this paragraph, how many steps are there in changing a flat tire? _____

Five Features of a Good Topic Sentence

Good writers know that an effective topic sentence has certain characteristics:

1. *It should guide the whole paragraph.*

A well-written topic sentence controls or guides the whole paragraph. It lets the reader know what the rest of the paragraph will be about.

2. *It should not be a well-known fact.*

A good topic sentence is not a general fact that everyone accepts as true. For example, *Cars use gasoline* is not a good topic sentence because there is not much more to say about the topic.

3. *It needs to be specific.*

A good topic sentence is specific. *Credit cards are useful* is not a good topic sentence because it is too general. The reader does not know exactly what to expect in the paragraph. *Credit cards are useful on long trips* is a good topic sentence because it is specific. The paragraph will most likely explain how credit cards can be used in one particular situation—a long trip.

4. *It cannot be too specific.*

A good topic sentence is not too specific. *A credit card can have a high credit limit* is very specific. There is nothing more to be said about the topic because the supporting details have already been stated.

5. *It must contain a controlling idea.*

A good topic sentence has a controlling idea—a group of words or a phrase that helps guide the flow of ideas in the paragraph: *A credit card is one of the most important things that a traveler needs while on vacation.* The underlined words in this sentence are the controlling idea.

ACTIVITY 3 Recognizing Effective Topic Sentences

Read each of the following groups of sentences. Write the general topic in the space provided. Put a check mark (✓) next to the best topic sentence.

- General topic: smartphones
 a. Smartphones have more features than regular phones.
 b. Smartphones are expensive.
 c. You can download apps on a smartphone.
- General topic: _____
 a. Pepperoni and mushrooms are my two favorite toppings on a pizza from Nino's Pizzeria.
 b. Nino's Pizzeria has a wide selection of delicious food.
 c. Nino's Pizzeria makes good chicken sandwiches.



3. General topic: _____

- _____ a. Some dolphins are gray.
- _____ b. Dolphins are quiet, friendly, unique, beautiful, and smart.
- _____ c. Dolphins are one of nature's most incredible animals.

4. General topic: _____

- _____ a. Few people know the interesting history of snowboarding.
- _____ b. Snowboards are made of fiberglass and have sharp metal edges.
- _____ c. Snowboarding is a winter sport.

5. General topic: _____

- _____ a. My favorite seashell is orange and white.
- _____ b. My hobby is collecting seashells, but my brother's hobby is playing sports.
- _____ c. Seashells make great souvenirs for several reasons.

Practice with Controlling Ideas

The controlling idea in your topic sentence guides your paragraph and lets the reader know what the paragraph is going to be about. The topic of the paragraph is limited by the controlling idea—it narrows the topic.

Here are some examples of topic sentences. The main subjects are circled, and the controlling ideas are underlined.

1. Eco-vacations are becoming very popular these days.

The reader expects to learn why eco-vacations are becoming popular.

2. Electric staplers are easier to use than other types of staplers.

The reader expects to learn what makes electric staplers easier to use.

3. Singapore is a very popular vacation destination in Asia.

The reader expects to learn some reasons why Singapore is a popular vacation destination.

4. There are three things that people need to be aware of before swimming in the ocean.

The reader expects to learn about the three things that people need to know before they swim in the ocean.

ACTIVITY 4 Reviewing Topic Sentences and Controlling Ideas

Read each group of sentences. Put a check mark (✓) next to the best topic sentence. Underline the controlling idea in the sentence you choose.

- a. North Americans drink about half a billion cups of coffee every day.
 b. Coffee is the drink of choice for many North Americans.
 c. Most North Americans drink coffee in order to wake up in the morning.
- a. Yesterday was the tenth of April.
 b. Yesterday I spilled spaghetti sauce on my shirt during my lunch break.
 c. Yesterday I had a terrible day at work.
- a. My best friend and I had a wonderful time at the amusement park last week.
 b. We rode three different roller coasters.
 c. My best friend and I enjoyed the roller coasters more than the Ferris wheel.
- a. Over half a million U.S. high school athletes participated in outdoor track and field events last year.
 b. The sport of track and field is very old.
 c. The sport of track and field has increased in popularity in recent years.
- a. My iguana's trip to the veterinarian was a catastrophe.
 b. My iguana scratched the veterinarian when she tried to pick it up.
 c. People do not like iguanas.



ACTIVITY 5 Using Controlling Ideas to Limit or Narrow a Topic

The following topic sentences are too general. Rewrite them and add or change the controlling ideas.

1. Lying is bad.

2. It is important to work hard.

3. The Louvre is located in Paris, France.

ACTIVITY 6 Writing Topic Sentences

Read the paragraphs on the following pages. Write a topic sentence for each paragraph in the space provided. Be sure your sentence includes a controlling idea.

Paragraph 2

Without that morning meal, the body does not wake up completely. It is lacking the necessary fuel for energy. By lunchtime, people who **skip** breakfast tend to be overly hungry, so they will eat too much. Perhaps the most serious effect of not eating breakfast is that the body's **metabolism** will not work properly. It has been said for generations: "Breakfast is the most important meal of the day."

to skip: go without;
pass over

metabolism: chemical
process in the body
to maintain proper
functions

Paragraph 3

First, you may want to begin your search online. There are numerous job-search websites, both local and international. When you have found an interesting job opening, do your research. Find out as much as you can about the company and the position itself. Next, review your résumé and make any necessary changes. The résumé should fit each job that you apply for. You should also make sure that the résumé **highlights** all of your previous employment and education. Finally, fill out the application and include all other necessary documentation. Remember that **persistence** is the key to getting the job you want. By following these steps, you can be confident that you will find a job sooner rather than later.

to highlight: to focus,
raise to the front

persistence: the quality
of not giving up, the
quality of continuing
to try

Perhaps the best-known type of acting is television acting. This type of acting generally takes the form of weekly programs produced on studio lots. Another form of acting is stage acting. Plays are performed in many different **venues**—from large halls to small theaters. The third type of acting is film acting. Film acting begins with a screenplay that includes all the written information about the set and the actors' dialog, and grows into a movie. **Regardless** of the type of acting, spectators **appreciate** the **craft** of acting and the many hours of enjoyment it provides.

a venue: a place, location

regardless of: no matter what, despite

to appreciate: to recognize the value, be glad about

a craft : a skill, expertise

Building Better Sentences: For further practice, go to Practice 1 on page 233 in Appendix 1.

Brainstorming

Imagine that a man is driving down the road and suddenly sees fire. What should he do?

On the next page, make a list of at least three ideas you have for what the man needs to do. Work quickly. Do not worry about how good each idea is. For now, do not worry about correct spelling or grammar. Your immediate goal is to create a list of as many ideas as possible in just a few minutes.



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

You have just completed a brainstorming activity. **Brainstorming** is quickly writing down all the thoughts that come into your head. When you brainstorm, you do not think about whether each idea is good or bad or whether your writing is correct. You simply write to get your ideas on paper. The process is called *brainstorming* because it feels like there is a storm of ideas in your brain.

ACTIVITY 7 Brainstorming Practice

Choose one of the topics below. Brainstorm ideas about the topic in the space provided. Write at least four ideas. Then write a topic sentence for a paragraph about that topic. Be sure to include a controlling idea.

- The best day of my life
- How tablet computers are changing our society
- Why I like a particular type of movie
- A place I would like to visit one day
- Benefits of studying English
- A person who changed my life

Brainstorm area:

Topic sentence:

ACTIVITY 8 Writing Your Own Paragraph

Use your brainstorming notes and topic sentence from Activity 7 to write a paragraph below. Be sure that your topic sentence guides the whole paragraph.

Supporting Sentences

Think of **supporting sentences** as scaffolding for the topic sentence. They describe, explain, clarify, or give examples of the main idea in the topic sentence. They answer questions such as *Who?* *What?* *When?* *Where?* *Why?* and *How?* They explain the topic sentence in greater detail and give the reader more information.



Each paragraph that you write must have enough supporting details to make the main idea clear to the reader. Likewise, a good writer makes sure that each supporting sentence is related to the topic sentence and its controlling idea. Study the following examples.

1. Topic sentence: People should consider joining a health club.
Supporting sentence: Health clubs give members an opportunity to exercise and socialize at the same time.
2. Topic sentence: Emergency towing service is great to have in case your car breaks down.
Supporting sentence: It can help you change a flat tire.
3. Topic sentence: Cell phones allow parents to stay in better contact with their children.
Supporting sentence: As long as his or her cell phone is turned on, a child can be reached at any time.