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**The EzineArticles.com Article Writing: Paragraph and Grammar Structure**  
Training Series offers you helpful tips and strategies for successful article writing  
with EzineArticles.com:

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## Basic Paragraph Structure

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Merriam-Webster Definition of "Paragraph": A paragraph is a subdivision of a written composition that consists of one or more sentences and deals with one point or gives the words of one speaker.

**Topic Sentence:** A topic sentence is the first sentence of your paragraph. It should be the most general sentence in a paragraph and should introduce the overall idea that you want to discuss later in the paragraph. Indentation of the first word in your topic sentence is no longer needed.

*Example:* Suppose that you want to write a paragraph about article marketing. The topic sentence leading your paragraph might look like this:

*"Writing dozens, hundreds or even thousands of articles and making them available for distribution is one of the best ways to ensure that your website gets surges in traffic over the long-haul."*

-Christopher Knight, CEO, EzineArticles.com

**Note:** The topic sentence introduces the topic in a general manner and sets up the rest of the paragraph for detail-oriented sentences. When a reader reads a topic sentence, a question should usually appear in the reader's mind. In this case, the question should be "Why" and the reader should expect that the rest of the paragraph will give an answer to this question.

**Supporting Sentences:** Supporting sentences must "support" or explain the idea expressed in the topic sentence. Details are important to help your reader understand exactly what you are writing about. It should answer the question posed by your topic sentence.

*Example:* Your supporting sentences for your paragraph about article marketing might look like this:

*"When you put your articles into distribution (meaning you submit them to ezine publishers and the article sites that ezine publishers visit for fresh content), you increase your chances of getting picked up as supplemental content by ezine publishers. They take your article and send it to their email newsletter membership or add it to their website."*

-Christopher Knight, CEO, EzineArticles.com

## Basic Paragraph Structure...Continued

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**Note:** Most paragraphs have 5-7 supporting sentences. If writing about a strategy or giving tips or list items, bulleted or numbered lists can be helpful here instead of full supporting sentences.

**Concluding Sentence:** The concluding sentence usually occurs at the end of a paragraph and summarizes the information presented in the paragraph. It is similar to, but not exactly the same as the topic sentence.

*Example:* Your concluding sentence for your paragraph about article writing might look like this:

*"The article writing labor investment and distribution submission can pay off with surges in traffic to your website for many years to come without having to buy the traffic. Consider it an investment in building your website's traffic-future."*

-Christopher Knight, CEO, EzineArticles.com

**Note:** Concluding sentences are primarily used in the formal writing of long paragraphs with multiple details in the supporting sentences. Short paragraphs (2-3 supporting sentences) do not require a concluding sentence.

## Paragraph Coherence and Unity

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Coherence literally means “to stick together”. Coherence in paragraph writing means that all of the ideas in a paragraph support the topic sentence of your paragraph and allow the reader to easily understand the ideas you want to express.

Paragraph coherence can be achieved by using major and minor connectors, these are also called “transitions”.

**Major Connectors:** Major connectors help organize the main points of your paragraph. These can also be expressed as bulleted or numbered lists.

*Examples:*

* First,	* Second,	* Third,
* Finally,	* In conclusion,	* To summarize,

**Minor Connectors:** Minor connectors provide coherence to a paragraph by connecting the sentences within each of the main parts of your paragraph.

*Examples:*

* In addition,	* Others include,	* ...,but...
* also	* That is,	* For instance,
	* For example,	

Paragraph Unity means that the paragraph is about only one main idea or topic. All the sentences in the paragraph (topic, supporting/detail sentences and sometimes, the conclusion sentence) are telling the reader about one main topic or idea. If you have a sentence that is not directly related to your main topic, your paragraph is considered to “lack unity” or the sentence is “off-topic” and should be removed from the paragraph.

Each paragraph in your article is a sub-division of your complete article topic.

### Example of EzineArticles Components and Support System:

- I. Article Title
- II. Article Summary
- III. Article Body
  - A. Introduction Paragraph
    1. Topic Sentence
      - a. Supporting Sentence
      - b. Supporting Sentence
      - c. Supporting Sentence
    2. Concluding Sentence (optional)
  - B. Supporting Paragraph(s)
- IV. Article Conclusion-summary of entire article theme
- V. Resource Box

## 10 Capitalization Rules

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- (1) Capitalize the first word of every sentence.
- (2) "I" is always capitalized, along with all its contractions.  
*Example:* I can do it.  
*Example:* I'll do it tomorrow.  
*Example:* I'm going to do it now.
- (3) Capitalize the first word of a quoted sentence.  
*Example:* She said, "I can do this."
- (4) Capitalize a proper noun.  
*Example:* Eiffel Tower  
*Example:* Christopher Knight  
*Example:* Federal Bureau of Investigation
- (5) Capitalize a person's title when it precedes the name.  
*Example:* Doctor Smith  
*Exception:* Mr. Smith, the doctor at the hospital, came to check up on me.
- (6) Capitalize any title when used as a direct address.  
*Example:* "Will you please answer the question, Senator?"
- (7) Do not capitalize names of seasons.
- (8) Capitalize points of the compass only when they refer to specific regions.  
*Example:* I have relatives visiting from the South.  
*Example:* I drove south to the end of the block.
- (9) After a sentence ending with a colon, do not capitalize the first word if it begins a list.  
*Example:* These are my favorite foods: chicken, potatoes and bread.
- (10) Capitalize the first word and all the words in titles of books, articles, works of art, etc. excluding short prepositions and conjunctions.  
  
*Example:* "EzineArticles Writing and Marketing"

## Subject and Verb Agreement

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(1) **Number Agreement:** A singular subject takes a singular verb. A plural subject takes a plural verb.

Example: This radio has six preset buttons. (singular)

Example: Most radios have six preset buttons. (plural)

(2) **Person Agreement:** A subject should also agree in “person” (1st person perspective, etc.) with its subject.

Tip: This affects only 3rd person singular subjects in the present tense.

*Example:* He runs to the store.

*Example:* The table looks warped.

Tip: Non 3rd Person Singular Subjects

*Example:* I run to the store.

*Example:* We run to the store.

Tip: The verb “to be” is an auxiliary verb and has eight forms.

1. Present Tense: am, is, are

*Example:* I am hungry.

*Example:* She is hungry.

*Example:* We are hungry.

2. Past Tense: was, were

*Example:* I was hungry.

*Example:* We were hungry.

3. Infinitive, Past Participle & Present Participle: be, been, being

*Example:* He has yet to be identified.

*Example:* He had been mean to my sister.

*Example:* He was being mean to my sister.

**Hint:** An agreement problem can sometimes occur when the verb of a sentence precedes the subject.

*Example:* [Wrong] There was several writers waiting for their articles to be approved.

*Example:* [Right] There were several writers waiting for their articles to be approved.

## Comma and Colon Tips

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**Commas:** Everyone has their own style when it comes to comma usage. Most modern styles guides now recommend using fewer commas rather than more, but be wary of run-on sentences.

(1) The use of a comma before “and” in a series is usually optional, provided there is no danger of misreading.

*Example:* We have apple, orange and grape juices. (no comma)

*Example:* We have apple, orange, and strawberry and grape juices. (comma)  
“Strawberry and grape” is one flavor; therefore, a comma is needed to avoid confusion.

(2) Use a comma after an introductory phrase or clause.

*Example:* After I realized that the store had not applied my discount voucher to my purchase, I returned to the store and customer service credited my account.

(3) Use a comma to join independent clauses.

*Example:* I went to the grocery store to pick up some milk, but they were already closed. (commas with two independent clauses)

*Example:* I offered to help and she accepted. (comma unnecessary with short clauses)

(4) Do not use a comma before the first item or after the last item in a series.

*Example:* [Wrong] You should combine, aerobics, weight training and stretching into your workout routine, if you want to see the best results.

*Example:* [Right] You should combine aerobics, weight training and stretching into your workout routine if you want to see the best results.

## Comma and Colon Tips...Continued

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**Colons:** The colon focuses the reader on what is to follow. Use it to introduce a list or idea.

(1) Colons should only be used within a sentence after an independent clause.

*Example:* We visited three cities during our vacation: San Diego, Los Angeles and Santa Barbara.

(2) Do not place a colon between a verb and its object or between a preposition and its object.

Example: [Wrong] We traveled to: San Diego, Los Angeles and Santa Barbara.  
(colon between preposition and object)

Example: [Right] We traveled to San Diego, Los Angeles and Santa Barbara.

Example: [Wrong] My neighbor lent me: a garden hoe, a shovel and a rake.  
(colon between *verb and objects*)

Example: [Right] My neighbor lent me a garden hoe, a shovel and a rake.

## 10 Rules of Punctuation

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Here are 10 quick EzineArticles punctuation tips:

(1) Spacing After Punctuation: One (1) space only is required after every punctuation mark (period, exclamation mark, question mark, colon, semicolon, commas, etc.), including bullets and numbers.

(2) Never use Excessive Punctuation!!!! This will not create a greater sense of urgency or strong emotion, especially in formal writing.

(3) Periods and commas always go inside of quotation marks.

*Example: "I think you're great."*

(4) There is never a space before a period or before a comma.

(5) When doing this "... " you should use only 3 dots.

(6) When using dashes, use two in a row.

*Example: Punctuation--10 Rules*

(7) Use no spaces on either side of a hyphen.

*Example: We need twenty-five boxes.*

(8) Use a question mark only after a direct question.

*Example: Can I ask you a question?*

(9) Use parentheses to enclose words or figures that clarify.

*Example: Use only one (1) space after a punctuation mark.*

(10) If the last word in a sentence ends in a period, do not follow it with another period.

*Example: I know that C.E.O. He is my boss.*

## Word Usage--10 Common Mistakes

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Mistakes are often made with word usage, "Which one do I chose?" Unfortunately, it's not something that can be remedied with spellchecker.

Here is a list of ten common word usage mistakes with explanations and examples of proper use:

### (1) **There vs. Their vs. They're**

- \* **There** is an indication of location.  
*Example:* I want to see that book over there.
- \* **Their** is a possessive version of *they*.  
*Example:* They took their dog to the groomer.
- \* **They're** is a contraction, short for *they are*.  
*Example:* They're going to the theatre tonight.

### (2) **A lot vs. Allot vs. Alot**

- \* **A lot** is an indication of amount.  
*Example:* I have a lot of laundry to do.
- \* **Allot** means *to distribute*.  
*Example:* I will allot you two cookies.
- \* **Alot** is not a word.

### (3) **I.e. vs. E.g.**

- \* **I.e.** means *in other words*.  
*Example:* Writing more articles increases your website traffic. I.e., it will bring you more exposure.
- \* **E.g.** means *for example*.  
*Example:* I have a lot of chores to do (e.g., laundry, dishes, vacuuming, dusting, etc.) today.

### (4) **To vs. Too vs. Two**

- \* **To** is a function word to indicate relative position.  
*Example:* We took the dog to the vet.
- \* **Too** can indicate *excessiveness* or *in addition to*.  
*Example:* The chili was too spicy.  
*Example:* I would like to go too.
- \* **Two** is the number 2.  
*Example:* I want two cookies.

(5) **Its vs. It's**

- \* **Its** is the possessive version of *it*.  
*Example:* Its door came off the hinges.
- \* **It's** is a contraction, short for *it is*.  
*Example:* It's a beautiful day.

(6) **You're vs. Your**

- \* **You're** is a contraction, short for *you are*.  
*Example:* You're the nicest person I've ever met.
- \* **Your** describes the possessor as someone else.  
*Example:* Your shirt is very wrinkled.

(7) **Loose vs. Lose**

- \* **Loose** is an adjective, the opposite of *tight* or *contained*.  
*Example:* I have loose change in my pocket.
- \* **Lose** is a verb that means *to suffer the loss of*.  
*Example:* I hope I don't lose my car keys.

(8) **Choose vs. Chose**

- \* **Choose** is a present tense verb meaning *to select*.  
*Example:* I choose to eat healthy foods.
- \* **Chose** is a past tense verb meaning *to select*.  
*Example:* I chose to eat healthy foods.

(9) **Effect vs. Affect**

- \* **Effect** is usually a noun meaning *result*.  
*Example:* The effect of increased traffic to your website is directly related to the number of articles you produce for syndication.
- \* **Affect** is usually a verb meaning *to influence*.  
*Example:* I hope this training series will affect you in a positive way.

(10) **Know vs. No vs. Now**

- \* **Know** is usually a verb meaning *to understand*.  
*Example:* I know you are not coming to the movie.
- \* **No** is a negative reply, refusal or disagreement.  
*Example:* There is no problem with the car.
- \* **Now** is usually an adverb meaning *at the present time or moment*.  
*Example:* Now I can easily write and market my articles.



## Your Article Writing and Marketing Call to Action:

If you do not have an EzineArticles.com Membership Account yet, go here to sign up for free:

<http://EzineArticles.com/>

If you are already an EzineArticles.com Expert Author, go here to log in to your account:

<http://EzineArticles.com/>

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## Your Challenge:

Increase your number of article agents selling for you and share your unique perspective as an expert of your niche!

Get into massive action -- we look forward to approving your next set of articles.