

Paragraph Writing

The good paragraph

A paragraph is a unit of information unified by a controlling idea. The paragraph is a good one only if the reader completely understands the unit of information it contains and if its controlling idea is completely developed.

The controlling idea is the central idea that is developed in a paragraph. The controlling idea is the summary of all the information contained in its paragraph.

The Controlling idea must be completely developed and explained in its paragraph:

There are three reasons why John is not going to university. In the first place, his father is dead and if John went to university, his mother would be left alone. She has a few friends, but they do not live very near, and she would probably have to spend most of evenings alone. Consequently, although John wants to go to university very much, he is going to get a job near home instead.

(This paragraph is bad because the controlling idea is not completely developed).

There are three reasons why John is not going to university. In the first place, his family is quite poor and, since he has four young brothers and sisters still at school, he feels that he should help his family financially as soon as possible. Secondly, if he went to university, his mother would be left alone to look after the young children. Finally, he has been offered a good job with excellent chances of promotion. Consequently, although he wants to go to university very much, John is going to take the job instead.