

Writing Paragraphs → Supporting Details

Level: High School

To write a good paragraph, you need to follow your topic sentence with supporting details. These details are specific in nature and not generalized like your topic sentence. The supporting sentences provide the information that backs up and proves the claim you made in the topic sentence. Without good supporting details, the topic sentence hangs virtually alone, and the whole paragraph is weak.

Read the three sentences providing supporting details for a topic sentence. Then put an “X” beside the topic sentence they would best support.

A) The games develop a player’s ability to gather and retain information quickly, through swift changes of scene. The player must make split-second choices, which enhance his or her ability to make real-life decisions in emergency situations. Computer games also help develop good reflexes as well as hand-eye coordination, as the player must respond immediately to abrupt changes in the game situation.

_____ Computer games can be harmful and make children unwilling or even unable to learn.

_____ Computer games can be used for developmental purposes as well as for simple fun.

_____ Computer games keep kids busy and out of trouble.

B) While bread, cakes, and cookies existed in our grandparents’ time, they were made entirely of natural ingredients. Today, these foods are full of chemicals, additives, and preservatives, so they can be trucked for long distances and kept for sale on the shelves for much longer. Even fruit and vegetables, which should be fresh and natural, are force-grown with chemical fertilizers and are sprayed with preservatives until there is very little nutrition left.

_____ Chemical additives enhance today’s foods and make them much more healthy.

_____ Today’s foods are a grand experiment in better living through chemistry.

_____ Chemicals make our food into something our grandmothers wouldn’t recognize as nutritious.

C) He has exercised discipline and single-minded dedication even to reach the professional level and become a member of a pro team. He exhibits toughness and determination, taking or making rough tackles, yet jumping up again, shrugging off the pain and bruises. He knows the value of working in cooperation with others, and is always ready to improve himself if it will benefit his team.

_____ The professional football player can be thought of as this generation's ideal hero.

_____ A professional football player sets a questionable example of how to achieve a goal.

_____ For a football player, nothing matters but getting to the professional level.

D) These cars are suitable for most driving in neighborhoods, but they can't reach the speeds necessary for highway driving, or even driving on city expressways. When a gas-powered car runs out of fuel, all it needs is a quick dash to a gas station, and it's filled up again in ten minutes. However, when an electric car battery runs down, it can take several long hours to recharge, and the driver sits at home, foot tapping impatiently while he or she waits. And if the electric car battery loses its charge when the driver is nowhere near a charging outlet, which is highly likely at the moment, a tow truck may be the only solution.

_____ A hybrid car has several advantages over the current models of electric car.

_____ The future is looking bright for the electric car.

_____ While switching to electric cars is a positive goal, it's taking a while to create viable models.

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