

## Writing Paragraphs → Supporting Details

Level: Middle 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 each topic sentence. Then put an “X” beside items in the following list that you think would make a good supporting detail for that topic sentence. (There may be more than three.)**

A) Some people think tsunamis are the worst type of natural disaster that can hit a region.

- The huge wave of water does damage twice, when first coming in, and then going out again.
- Their main weapon is the high wind that accompanies them.
- They may assault an area already devastated by a coastal earthquake.
- The shaking occurs when a fault in deep rock layers slips or gives way.
- They can lift an entire house and twirl it around in the air.
- The massive weight of water can sweep away protective barriers as well as buildings.

B) Music has gone through many stages in the past century, to bring us to the popular music we enjoy today.

- Music is often said to be a good psychological tool for soothing strong negative emotions.
- Some types of music developed as musicians responded to political events.
- Classical music was still the dominant form in the early twentieth century.
- The ability to create a professional violin requires years of skill and experience.
- Country music developed in the deep South, as rural and cowboy culture gained expression.
- The stylized dance of disco passed quickly, giving way to the rough sound of grunge and punk.

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C) Moving house to a new area or city can create a sense of loss and other negative emotions.

- \_\_\_\_\_ A change of scene can be exciting and exhilarating.
- \_\_\_\_\_ People often say that they feel they have no roots, and don't really belong anywhere.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Broken items provide an opportunity to get something new.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The loss of familiar things can create nervous stress, even when people don't realize it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Without a knowledge of local community supports, people can feel helpless.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It's quite a job to pack, load up a truck, and make a cross-country trek.

D) While some believe competition to be healthy, others think that it harms relationships rather than benefits them.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Competition makes it natural to view all others as potential opponents or even "enemies."
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cooperation with others is less likely, especially if they do a similar type of business.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Competition brings out a spirit of always trying to do one's best.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Competitiveness makes everything, even human relationships, into contests.
- \_\_\_\_\_ People tend to look for advantages over others rather than for ways to help them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cooperation offers both parties benefits and positive results.