When you read your textbook, the newspaper, magazine articles, or any other types of publications, you are reading expository writing. When you write answers for an essay test, you use the expository form.

In an **expository paragraph**, you give information. You explain a subject, give directions, or show how something happens. In expository writing, linking words like first, second, then, and finally are usually used to help readers follow the ideas.

This paragraph, like any other, organizes itself around three parts. A **topic sentence** allows the reader to understand what you are writing about. The middle part of the paragraph contains **supporting sentences** that follow one another in a logical sequence of steps. The **concluding sentence** closes your subject with an emphasis on the final product or process desired by the topic.

Remember that all paragraphs should contain a topic sentence. It may be even more important in the expository paragraph because this is where the main idea of the paragraph is expressed. This topic sentence lets the reader know what the rest of the paragraph will discuss.

**Example:**

Going to college can be expensive. First, college tuition and room and board can cost anywhere from $2,000 to more than $10,000 per semester. Other expenses make going to college even more expensive. For example, books typically cost between $100 and $500 each term. Second, materials are also very expensive. Paper, notebooks, writing utensils, and other supplies required often cost more at the college bookstore than at any local discount department store. For instance, a package of notepaper costing $2 at a discount store might cost $5 at a college bookstore. Finally, there are all kinds of special fees added onto the bill at registration time. A college student might have to pay a $50 insurance fee, a $20 activity fee, a $15 fee to the student government association and anywhere from $500 to $100 for parking. There is another fee if a student decides to add or drop classes after registration. The fees required to attend college never seem to end.

The topic sentence in the example lets the reader know that the paragraph will talk about the expenses of going to college. Immediately following the topic sentence is the first supporting sentence (underlined) and two detail/example sentences. Each support sentence and its two detail/example sentences are shown in different colors so you can see where one ends and the next begins. Finally, the closing sentence neatly ties back to the topic sentence by rephrasing it.

Notice the use of transitional words to help the reader follow the ideas. Also, notice the use of **third person point of view** in this paragraph. The third person point of view (he, she, one) is most commonly used for
expository writing, technical writing, and any other sort of writing that has a business-minded or persuasive intention or purpose. For our purposes in this class, you will always use third person point of view when writing expository paragraphs, unless otherwise directed. This means there should be no "I" or "you" words anywhere in the paragraph.