

# Writing Basics Series

## UNDERSTANDING PARAGRAPHS

REM 302A

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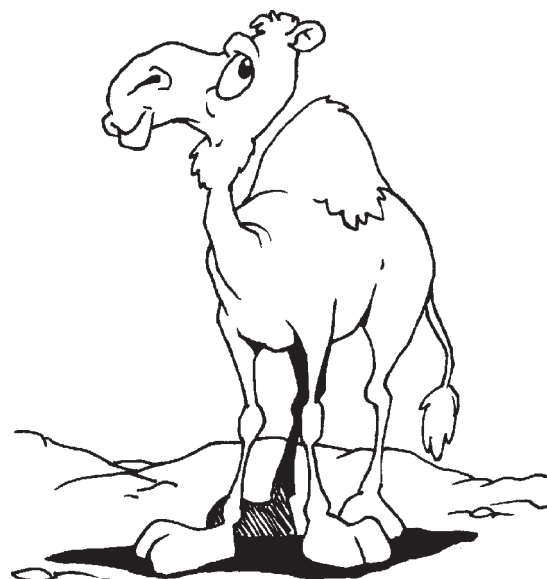
Name \_\_\_\_\_

## What is a Paragraph?

To help a reader understand or follow the line of thought in a story, article, news account, or report, a writer divides the information into parts called paragraphs. A paragraph is a group of sentences that work together to tell about a single topic or idea. When the writer moves on to another topic, or to different information about the same subject, it is put into a new paragraph. Each new paragraph is set off from the others by its first line which is indented, or started, a short distance from the left margin.

**Read the paragraph; then answer the questions.**

Camels have special features that help them survive in the desert. They have double rows of eyelashes, hairy ear openings, and nostrils that can be closed down. All of these protect them from blowing sand. Camels also store fat in their humps. They lose body water very slowly. They can go for several days without any food or water.



1. The paragraph is about what topic?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What special features do camels have to protect them from sand?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Why can they go several days without food and water?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Complete the statement.**

A paragraph is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

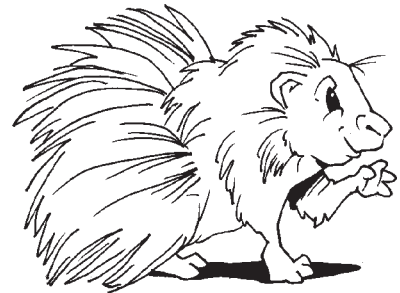
## Starting A New Paragraph

A paragraph tells about a single topic or idea. When more than one topic or idea is written about a subject, each new topic or idea is put in a separate paragraph.

The following article is about one subject--porcupines. It tells two different things about porcupines. The sentences that tell about one thing should be in one paragraph. The sentences that tell about the second thing should be in another paragraph.

**Read the article. Decide where the second paragraph should begin.**

The tail and body of a porcupine are covered with about 30,000 loosely attached quills. It cannot throw its quills, as some people claim. If the porcupine bats its enemy with its tail, though, the quills attach themselves to whatever they touch. A porcupine eats tree bark. It also craves salt. Farmers sometimes find the wooden handles of their tools chewed off. The porcupine had found wood seasoned with the salt of human sweat.



1. Write the first sentence of the second paragraph.

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2. What is the topic of the first paragraph?

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3. What is the topic of the second paragraph?

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. Read each sentence below. If the sentence tells about an insect, write an I on the line. If it tells about a spider, write an S on the line.

\_\_\_\_\_ An insect's body is divided into three parts.

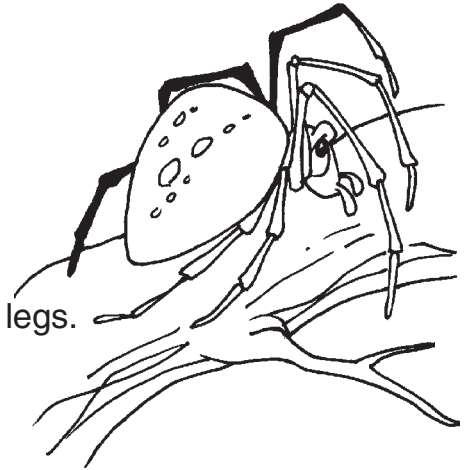
\_\_\_\_\_ A spider's body is made up of two parts.

\_\_\_\_\_ Insects also have two sets of wings and a set of antennae.

\_\_\_\_\_ Another thing about insects is that they have six legs.

\_\_\_\_\_ It has eight legs instead of six.

\_\_\_\_\_ Spiders do not have wings or antennae.



2. Write each group of sentences in order to make two paragraphs. The first paragraph should tell about insects. The second one should tell about spiders.

## Insects and Spiders

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. Read each sentence below. If the sentence tells about pizza, write a P on the line. If it tells about a burger, write a B on the line.

\_\_\_\_\_ Bill loves pizza.

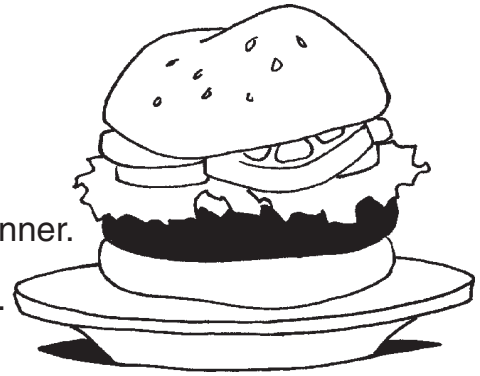
\_\_\_\_\_ His favorite kind is pepperoni pizza.

\_\_\_\_\_ Rick's favorite food is a hamburger.

\_\_\_\_\_ Bill could eat pizza for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

\_\_\_\_\_ He likes pickle relish and onions on his burger.

\_\_\_\_\_ Rick once ate four hamburgers for lunch.



2. Write each group of sentences in order to make two paragraphs. The first paragraph should tell about pizza. The second one should tell about burgers.

## Pizzas or Burgers

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