

## Paragraph Writing as A Sensibility-Based Productive Skill

Bambang Suseno  
[bambangssn@gmail.com](mailto:bambangssn@gmail.com)

Marita Nurharjanti

Academy of Foreign Language Sinema

Academy of Foreign Language Sinema

---

### Abstract

Paragraph writing in the context of Academic Writing in a number of academies and universities in Indonesia is considered a skill whose mastery needs reasoning or logical thinking besides knowledge of grammatical rules, lexis, and also ability to translate from bahasa Indonesia into English effectively and efficiently.

Logical thinking should be exercised ever since the student writers begin their initial up to the final phase of writing a paragraph. They may not necessarily pour down their ideas in sentences the way they like. This is because first of all they have to determine the main idea, also known as topic sentence, that needs formulating from the general subject or topic that is still too broad to be developed. To formulate the topic sentence, they have to exercise their logical thinking. Then, the main idea has to be supported by supporting sentences which are related to one another. The process of writing supporting sentences and their interrelationship should also be based on logical thinking. Finally, the paragraph is closed by means of a sentence which concludes the discussion of the whole paragraph.

A paragraph that flows smoothly or, in other words, is readable is, without any doubt, the one that is effective and sensible.

Keywords: *general subject, topic sentence, supporting sentences, concluding sentence,*

---

### 1. Introduction.

Devoted to three sections, this article concerns itself with single paragraph writing. It comprises introduction, underlying steps in writing a paragraph and conclusion. A little discussion about essay writing, however, is also included just to give an illustration of how different a single paragraph from an essay writing really is.

Single paragraph writing is widely represented in academic or college writing (Fawcett and Sandberg, 1984) (Hogue, 1996) (Oshima and Hogue, 1997) and may roughly be considered as falling into the category of semi-guided writing. It is not (fully) guided writing. Nor is it free writing. As a matter of fact, it is writing skills whose aim is for beginning student writers studying at academies and/or universities in general.

It has frequently been mentioned in articles and textbooks on the teaching of writing that there are more or less three categories of writing, i.e. guided, semi-guided and free

writing. Guided writing is concerned with writing activities whose focus is on the production by students, particularly academic or university students of English as a foreign language, who may be classified as beginning student writers, of written exercises such as copying a word or a sentence, supplying correct forms of parts of speech, completing cloze passages and sentence combining. The student writers who do the afore-mentioned writing exercises are normally those sitting in the first year and having pre-intermediate level of knowledge of English. Therefore, in this stage they are not yet given freedom to express themselves by making elaboration on the written language they have to produce. For that reason, there is hardly any portion of the generation of ideas through which they may learn to become sensible.

Becoming sensible is a must for the student writers when they are assigned to write a discourse like, for instance, a paragraph or, let alone, an essay in conjunction with academic writing. This means that they just cannot pour down any ideas they have in their brain as freely as they like on a piece of paper without thinking logically of what steps to take to produce a written discourse. By all means, some idea, whatever it is about, should be carefully and intelligently controlled by means of which other ideas supporting and developing it can be generated. It is by reason of this that the freedom of expressing oneself in academic paragraph writing requires sensibility in order that the student writers are able to write a clear and intelligible paragraph. In some respect, the instructor's role to help the beginning student writers gain the writing skills in this level is readily perceivable during the teaching and learning process in the classroom. For instance, he has to explain the vocabulary and any grammatical elements such as articles, prepositions, kinds of phrases, kinds of clauses, word order, sentence parts, kinds of sentences and mechanics the beginning student writers have to apply appropriately in producing a certain kind of sentence, précis and/or paragraph.

By semi-guided writing is meant that the student writers are partly guided and partly given freedom to express their ideas in a piece of writing. In other words, as they advance in their knowledge of grammar and as they are familiarised with how to organise their thoughts, so they are guided to write a paragraph by developing a certain topic provided by their instructor. Here, in this level, the instructor's role to deal with grammar and to incite the beginning student writers to use the given lexicon may partly be reduced but his role to motivate them to learn how to write systematically organised sentences into a paragraph may be intensified. They may be guided to express their ideas in a determined number of sentences making up a paragraph on the basis of a topic sentence provided by their instructor. It is certain that the topics are those relatively within the students' grasp, for instance entertainment, sports, hobbies, academic activities, etc.

As with free writing, the beginning student writers are assigned to write a longer paragraph and/or essay by developing a general topic of their own choice. Regarded as having been able to express their ideas in a paragraph legibly and coherently, they are accordingly free to make use of their writing skills to advance from writing a paragraph to writing an essay. The instructor mostly reduces his role to explain grammatical conventions and lexicon that the beginning student writers are going to use and leave them to their own resources to write a piece of writing, be it a paragraph or an essay.

Paragraph writing becomes the main concern in this article in that it is in this stage that beginning student writers are expected to start learning studiously about how to limit the topic in order to formulate a general statement or topic sentence, how to generate and organise ideas and how to employ correct grammatical conventions in a limited but concise piece of writing. In addition, a paragraph constitutes a right medium for them

to learn to express themselves effectively in written language prior to writing a longer piece of writing.

In regard to elements this kind of discourse is made up of, a paragraph looks structurally simple yet it is a complete unit in itself and is not necessarily part of a longer composition, i.e. an essay. Consisting variously of some 150 to 350 words, it contains such structural elements as introduction, body (development) and conclusion, represented successively by an introductory sentence, a series of supporting sentences and a concluding sentence.

The other sort of discourse, which is longer and more elaborated in terms of content, is generally referred to as essay. It is also identifiable as multi-paragraph composition. Different in terms of diagram and of the series of sentences it is built up from, yet similar in terms of structure to a paragraph, an essay comprises several paragraphs. In it there may be four to five paragraphs, of which the first functions as introduction, the next two or three as body and the last one serves as conclusion, making up roughly 400 to 1000 or more words. This sort of discourse can be developed according to various rhetorical modes of writing embodied in exposition like, for instance argumentation and persuasion, description, narration, illustration, comparison and contrast, process, classification and division, and so forth. Despite their common association to essay, however, rhetorical modes of writing are applicable as well to paragraph.

This article aims at discussing sensibility aspects as seen from the phases of single paragraph writing. In *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* it is stated in terms of usage that the word 'sensibility' is not related to 'sensible' in its meaning of 'reasonable and practical' but it is closer to 'sensible of' which is the same as 'conscious of.' (Proctor 1982, 1012). Sensibility, then, has something to do with consciousness. As regards paragraph writing, consciousness is the condition that the beginning student writers must get used to in order that they are able to make use of his logical thinking, as has been explained previously, to understand and be able to do the whole process of writing a concise but legible paragraph. Sensibility contributes to creativity in several respects. It is a condition in which the beginning student writers should make use of their reasoning ability to formulate from a general topic a good and workable topic sentence which serves as the backbone of the paragraph, to generate and select supporting details, facts and examples which develop the topic sentence, and finally to write a conclusion or to end the discussion in their paragraph by restating what has been written about in the general statement or topic sentence. Right from the very first phase we are given to understand that sensibility is present and plays an essential role in shaping the beginning student writers' creativity in writing a paragraph. How sensibility determines the intelligibility in paragraph writing may be apparent in sections that follow.

## **2. Underlying step in writing a paragraph**

Prior to analysing the conventional phases of writing it is important that we are aware that paragraph writing needs special concentration. Effective paragraph writing starts with clear thinking; the beginning student writers need to learn the logic they have to make use of when expressing their ideas in a paragraph. They have to think in an analytical way even when they are still in the pre-writing activities. At the outset of the teaching and learning process, they must be introduced to the fact that a paragraph, being a complete unit in itself, is a group of sentences related to one another and develops one main idea. The main idea in question is also commonly called a subject or topic.

Conventionally, there are three phases of writing: planning, drafting and revising (Ruggiero 1981) (Hacker 1992), each of which has its own special importance.

## **2.1 Planning**

Appearing itself as an initial phase, planning should start with a careful preparation. In this phase the recognition among the beginning student writers of a topic is imperative. They may be directed to learning to understand what a general topic really is. In view of the fact that the general topic usually takes the form of a phrase or more often a word, they must be aware that it is still too general, too commonplace or, in other words, too broad to be developed into a paragraph. Hence, they must be directed to explore and discover which part of the topic is interesting enough to be treated in a paragraph. This can be achieved by way of limiting down the topic into a sentence. The sentence is not just a sentence that simply contains a subject and predicate and object, or a subject, linking verb and complement, and so forth. The sentence, however, is made to comprise at least two essential elements, namely (1) *subject* and (2) *controlling idea*. The *subject* is someone or something to be written about, while the *controlling idea* is the main point, opinion, feeling that we feel about the subject, and it controls or limits what we will write about it in our paragraph (Oshima and Hogue 1997, 72). The controlling idea does not only tell the readers what the paragraph is about but also it tells the writer what he/she should write about (Kirzner and Mandell 1978, 50). This very sentence is usually also called a general statement or topic sentence. It is the topic sentence that the beginning student writers can use as a guide and/or the main point to write their paragraph effectively.

The topic sentence declares in a general way the principal idea. It is more general than the other sentences in a paragraph and therefore includes them. Because the topic sentence tells what the entire paragraph is about, it is usually in the first sentence (Fawcett and Sandberg 4-5, 1984). In addition, writing the topic sentence as the first sentence makes it easier for the student writers to look back at it often as they write the supporting sentences. This will help them stay on the subject as they write (Oshima and Hogue 71, 1997).

The so-called topic sentence, has not always been available, while the general topic is conversely ready more often than not. Unavailability of the topic sentence requires the beginning student writers to formulate the general topic by narrowing it down and/or making it limited and focussed to a specific point to develop. For instance, the subjects or the topics of 'family' and 'sports' are general topics which are still too broad or too unlimited to cover in at least a one-hundred-and-fifty-word paragraph. The beginning student writers would have to write pages and pages and/or even a book to support adequately any point they might make about these general topics. They have to narrow each of them down until they have a topic sentence that they can deal with in at least one hundred and fifty to three hundred words. A general topic, then, must go through several stages of limiting before it is narrow enough to write about. Below are two lists dealing with several stages that the beginning student writers must go through in moving from each of the general topics to narrow topic sentences.

- A. 1. Family.
  2. Twin brothers.
  3. The characteristics (features) of the twin brothers.
  4. Andri and Indra are twin brothers with similarities and differences.
  5. In spite of the fact that Andri and Indra are very much alike in some respects, they differ in the way they enjoy their favourite pastime.

- B. 1. Sports.  
2. Outdoor sports.  
3. The benefits of rock climbing.  
4. Rock climbing is a highly dangerous outdoor sport which has benefits.  
5. Being a highly dangerous outdoor sport, rock climbing teaches its enthusiasts toughness, patience and solidarity among them.

Fawcett and Sandberg (1984) state that a topic sentence must be a complete sentence, not a fragment. Neither is it a phrase. So, what are stated in number 3 of the two different topics written above cannot be regarded as topic sentences or general statements. On the contrary, they are fragments. Fragments such as these are more likely to be used as titles instead of topic sentences. What we have in number 4 in both examples A and B are complete sentences in themselves but are not yet workable topic sentences, for they are still too broad or not limited enough to be developed in a paragraph. If we are to write a paragraph using the two sentences written in number 4 in both examples A and B as the guides, we could include almost anything. With such sentences we could write books or very long articles. Consider, for instance, the following questions: *What is so interesting about twins? What makes rock climbing beneficial?* The questions such as these cannot be explained in several sentences only, for the explanation must be thorough and may satisfy the reader's curiosity. Otherwise, the paragraph through which the beginning student writers wish to share their experience with the readers may lack effectiveness and, thus, fail to draw the readers' interest. Such is the thing the beginning student writers in general have often been insensible of. To avoid this, they have to focus on certain points which may likely be of the readers' interest by showing a contrast, for instance the danger of rock climbing is obvious and undebatable but it is because of the danger that the climbers may gain something beneficial to them or why, despite its being dangerous, many people are still keen on doing this kind of sport?

Through the five stages of restriction as illustrated above, the two general topics have been formulated to become workable topic sentences, as seen in number 5, for they now have a subject and a controlling idea in each of them. The topic sentences below, then, may serve as guides as the student writers write the rest of the paragraph.

In spite of the fact that Andri and Indra are very much alike in some respect,

**Subject**

they differ in the way they enjoy their favourite pastime.

**Controlling Idea**

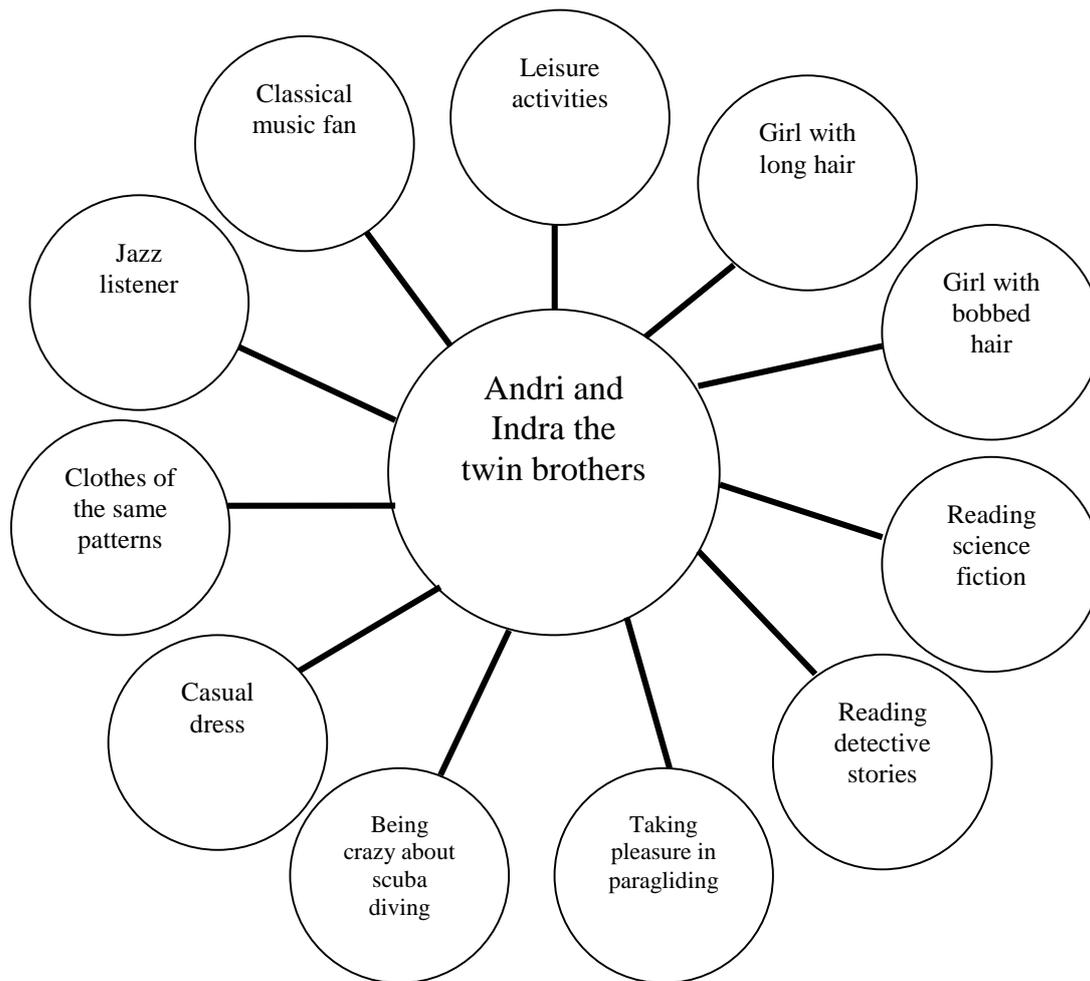
Being a high risk sport, rock climbing teaches its enthusiasts toughness,

**Subject**

**Controlling Idea**

patience and solidarity among them.

The next prewriting activity that follows the formulation of the topic sentence from the general topic is to develop it by applying techniques known as *clustering, branching, freewriting, listing, or asking questions* (Hacker 4, 1992). These techniques turn out to have the same objective, i.e. to generate as many ideas as possible. Hacker (1992) further states that *to cluster* ideas, first of all the student writers have to write their topic in the middle part of a sheet of paper. Next, they can draw a circle around it. Then, they have to surround that circle with related ideas connected to it with lines. If some of the related ideas lead to more specific clusters, they may write them down as well.



The beginning student writers who wish to use the *branching* technique have to put the main idea at the top of the page and then make a list of major supporting ideas after it, leaving plenty of space between ideas. They may branch out to minor ideas just to the right or left of each major ideas, drawing lines to show the relationship. The activity of branching may be continued, if minor ideas lead to even more specific ideas.

The brainstorming technique called *freewriting* is simply the same in meaning as nonstop writing. The beginning student writers are expected to set aside around ten or fifteen minutes and write anything that comes out of their mind, without stopping to think about what appropriate choice of word, spelling, meaning or even grammatical elements to use. The point is to relax and see what happens. If there is nothing much happening, it will be alright, for he will lose ten to fifteen minutes only. This article, however, does not discuss this technique in length for reason of efficiency.

The next brainstorming technique is *listing*, that is also known by the term enumeration (Wishon and Burks 82-85, 1980). In this sort of activity, the beginning student writers are guided to explore as many thoughts or specific details related to the controlling idea as they can by writing them in a list to develop the topic sentence available. Whatever details, examples, or facts they can think of can be written down on the draft paper. The list of ideas, which serves as an outline or a plan for the paragraph, may then take the form as follows:

Title : The Characteristics of the Twin Brothers

Topic sentence : *In spite of the fact that Andri and Indra are very much alike in some respects, they differ in the way they enjoy their pastime.*

Support :

1. Both resemble each other.
2. They both have the height of 1.85 m.
3. Their physiques look like those of athletes.
4. Their faces are adorned with thick eyebrows, bright eyes and sharp pointed noses.
5. Their thin lips never fail to smile greetings to anyone.
6. They like dressing casually.
7. They prefer faded blue jeans and polo shirts to tailor-made trousers and long-sleeved shirts.
8. They wear clothes of the same patterns.
9. They never seem to behave oddly.
10. They never wear intentionally torn or patched shirts and/or trousers or odd accessories to impress people nor are they inconsiderate.
11. They always show friendliness and hospitality whenever they meet people.
12. The twins, however, differ remarkably in going about their leisure activities.
13. Andri likes reading science fiction.
14. Indra likes reading detective stories.
15. Andri takes pleasure in paragliding.
16. Indra is crazy about scuba diving.
17. Andri is a jazz listener.
18. Indra is a faithful classical music fan.
19. Andri has a liking for a girlfriend with long hair.
20. Indra is fond of a girlfriend with bobbed hair.
21. Twins though they are, they do not always have similarities.

Many ideas can also be generated by *asking questions* (Hacker 1992, 6). In this respect, the beginning student writers can make sure that they have adequately surveyed their subject by raising some questions that are relevant to the subject or topic. This kind of activity represents another form of brainstorming indeed. The generation of ideas by asking questions is perceivable through the following example. To help the beginning student writers focus their attention to the subject they like to discuss in their paragraph, it is advisable that the topic sentence is included.

Title: The Characteristics of the Twin Brothers

Topic sentence : *In spite of the fact that Andri and Indra is very much alike in some respects, they differ in the way they enjoy their pastime.*

Supports :

1. How are Andri and Indra?
2. How tall are the twin?
3. How do their physiques look like?
4. What are their faces adorned with?
5. What do they do when they meet anyone?
6. What do they like doing?
7. When do they wear clothes of the same patterns?
8. What happens when they wear clothes of the same patterns?
9. Where do they make people puzzled?
10. Where do they exercise politeness?
11. How do Andri and Indra differ?

12. Who likes reading science fiction?
13. Who likes reading detective stories?
14. Why does Indra take pleasure in paragliding?
15. Why is Andri crazy about scuba diving?
16. Who is a serious jazz listener?
17. Who is a faithful classical music fan?
18. With whom does Andri go to social events?
19. What sort of a girl is Indra fond of to go with to social events?
20. How are Andri and Indra in going about their daily life?

The last two brainstorming techniques may be considered the easiest and most appropriate to use, for they enable the student writers to arrange the specific details, facts and examples in order in a relatively easier way and so the drafting process of a paragraph, i.e. the organization of the specific details may in turn be expected to flow smoothly.

Once the specific details have been generated, the beginning student writers should then think of how to conclude or to end the paragraph. In the paragraph the concluding sentence serves to draw together and clarify everything that has previously been said (Kirzner and Mandell 103, 1978). It is stated further that the conclusion should echo the main idea, without dully repeating it (Hacker 22, 1992). In other words, a concluding sentence in a paragraph is the beginning student writers' chance to remind the reading audience of their topic sentence. In concluding the paragraph, however, they have to avoid introducing new ideas.

## **2.2 Drafting**

Having done brainstorming activity, i.e. listing and asking questions, the beginning student writers may start writing rough draft according to the order of the specific details already explored. The rough draft on the basis of details that can be made by asking questions and by enumeration or listing is as follows:

### The Characteristics of the Twin Brothers

*In spite of the fact that Andri and Indra are very much alike in some respects, they differ in the way they enjoy their pastime.* Both Andri and Indra resemble each other. They are like many other twins. They are quite tall for the average Indonesians. Their physiques are like those of athletes. Their faces are adorned with thick eyebrows, bright eyes. Their lips never fail to smile greetings. They always show friendliness and hospitality anytime and anywhere they meet people and relatives. They like dressing casually. They wear clothes of the same patterns. They never seem to behave oddly. They always exercise politeness whenever they meet people. The twins, however, differ remarkably in going about their leisure activities. Andri likes reading science fiction. Indra likes reading detective stories. Andri takes pleasure in paragliding. Indra is crazy about scuba diving. Andri is a jazz listener. Indra is a faithful classical music fan. Andri has a liking for a girlfriend with long hair. Indra is fond of a girlfriend with bobbed hair. Andri and Indra, however, do not always have similarities.

The rough draft written above now represents a paragraph although it is not an effective one because the details that have been organised mostly consist of simple sentences. When readers read such a paragraph, it will be likely that they will easily get bored. To avoid this the beginning student writers are suggested to use variations of sentences.

### 2.3 Revising

Such a rough draft as exemplified above can be revised by employing more than one kind of sentences. The use of compound, complex or even the combination between compound and complex sentences may obviously help the beginning student writers make the paragraph readable or effective, or this can be a sign that they are able to communicate with the reading audience smoothly. Therefore, to make a paragraph smooth, clear, vivid, concise and effective, they have to make some revisions so that the readers are interested to read it.

Besides making use of complex sentences, they can apply revisions that may include the dropping of certain ideas that do not conform with the controlling idea. Details in the form of statements in the respective numbers 9, 10, and 11 explored by way of *listing* and question number 10 as a result of exploring ideas of *asking questions* done previously, for instance, have to be eliminated, for they are obviously irrelevant to the central idea. Unrelated or irrelevant ideas may certainly bring about awkwardness, and, therefore, the paragraph may not be interesting to read or boring. Related or relevant ideas among the sentences are undoubtedly essential so as not to bring about confusion to reading audience. When such a paragraph does not consistently focus on one central idea, it can leave the reading audience wondering exactly what it is that the beginning student writers intend to say.

Also, in order that the beginning student writers are able to write an effective and intelligible paragraph in which the sentences cohere or are interdependently related together without any illogical shift, they have to know how to provide transitions. Providing transitions and repeating keywords constitute the methods of maintaining coherence. When student writers are able to make use of transitions intelligibly and sensibly, chance it they are able to prevent the reading audience from being bored. Transitions are signals that help the reading audience follow the direction of the beginning student writers' ideas. Below are some common transitional words and phrases grouped according to the kind of signal they give to the reading audience. Note that certain words and phrases provide more than one kind of signal.

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Additional signals</i>          | also, and, another, finally, furthermore, in addition, besides, moreover.                        |
| <i>Time signals</i>                | after, as, before, during, finally, first, meanwhile, next, now then, whereas, while.            |
| <i>Space signals</i>               | above, across, below, nearby, next to, on the opposite side, to the left, to the right.          |
| <i>Change-of-direction signals</i> | but, however, in contrast, on the contrary, on the other hand, otherwise, still, whereas, yet.   |
| <i>Illustration signals</i>        | as an illustration, for example, for instance, for one thing, once, specifically, such as.       |
| <i>Conclusion signals</i>          | as a result, consequently, finally, in summary, last of all, then, therefore, thus, to conclude. |

The activity of revising the rough draft may take place one or even several times depending on the need and the sort of mistakes the beginning student writers may commit. The beginning student writers who are not quite good at writing may need more than one revision. However, to maintain efficiency, this article deals with one revision only.

The rough draft that has been revised eventually becomes a well-organised paragraph, especially if it is compared to that of the previous one. In this revised paragraph the use of transitional devices such as those underlined below obviously maintain the coherence of the paragraph. Notice also that the number of simple sentences used has been reduced and replaced with complex sentences.

#### The Characteristics of the Twin Brothers

*In spite of the fact that Andri and Indra are very much alike in some respect, they differ in the way they enjoy their pastime. For one thing, as twin brothers, both physically resemble each other like many other twins in general. With a height of around 1.85 m they are physically quite tall for the average Indonesians. Since they are both regular members of a fitness centre in town, their physiques look like those of athletes. Their oval, cute faces are adorned with thick eyebrows, bright eyes, sharp-pointed noses. Besides, their thin lips never fail to smile greetings when they meet anyone. Just as they have come of age, so they like dressing casually. As an illustration, they prefer faded blue jeans and polo shirts to tailor-made trousers and long-sleeved shirts. When they step up in public view, for instance, when they go to campus and to library or when hang around in malls or cafés, they specifically wear clothes of the same patterns most of the time, making people outside their family circle puzzled to recognise which is which. Apart from the physical as well as habitual likenesses they both share, however, the twins differ remarkably in going about their leisure activities. Andri likes reading science fictions, information technology magazines and automotive bulletins, while Indra indulges himself in reading detective stories, adventure undertakings and aviation technology magazines. Indra, as opposed to to Andri who takes pleasure in paragliding, is crazy about scuba diving more than anything else. This is quite reasonable so long as Andri has a great plan to become a pilot, while Indra himself wishes to become a marine scientist. Whereas Andri is a serious jazz listener, Indra would rather be a faithful classical music fan. When invited to social events, Andri has a liking for a girlfriend with long hair to go with, but Indra is always fond of a girlfriend who wears her hair bobbed. Twins though they are, they do not always have similarities.*

On the basis of the same obvious methods applied to the first one, the second topic sentence, which reads "*Being a high risk sport, rock climbing teaches enthusiasts care, toughness, patience and solidarity among them*" can be supported by a series of statements as follows:

Title : The Benefits of Rock Climbing

Topic sentence : *Being a high risk sport, rock climbing teaches its enthusiasts care, toughness, patience and solidarity among them.*

Support :

1. Rock climbing is an activity of climbing sheer rock faces.
2. It is also an activity of testing the climbers' physical and mental strength against tiredness, weather and the danger of gravity.
3. Whoever is keen on participating in this sport is seriously required to follow basic, standard procedures and techniques because rock climbing poses danger.

4. Before undertaking the activity, climbers should prepare themselves by doing physical exercises and check climbing gears to ensure safety.
5. Climbers should choose appropriate clothing.
6. A team of climbers are to work together to find a route to go up to the top of a rock face.
7. In determining the climbing route, climbers need to have great patience, care and a sound judgement.
8. Climbers should be extra careful to ascend a rock face using handholds and footholds and to place running belays for protection during the climb.
9. Climbers have to maintain mutual dependence to ensure safety from the moment they start climbing the rock face until they finish it.
10. They have to be in balance on secure footholds before they release a handhold to reach for the next.
11. While ascending the rock face, the leader places running belays to which the rope, tied to his and his climbing partner's body, is clipped to protect himself from falling twice the distance between him and his climbing partner.
12. The second climber (belayer) pays out or takes in the rope patiently, carefully and vigilantly when the leader is ascending the rock face.
13. The second climber must be ready to use the methods of applying friction in case the leader is falling of the rock face.
14. Rock climbers should be physically and mentally tough.
15. After he has reached a ledge, the leader fixes some anchors and lets his climbing partner to join him.
16. While ascending the rock face, the second man takes apart all the running belays the leader has fixed to lead the climb.
17. The leader and the second man may change their position to climb the next pitch, and thus the second man assumes the task done previously by the leader.
18. When the goal, that is to reach the top, has been accomplished, it is only then that the climbers can find the real meaning this branch of sport can give.

The second method of discovering ideas, that is asking questions on the basis of the topic sentence: "*Being a high risk outdoor sport, rock climbing teaches its participants care, toughness, patience and solidarity among them*", may look like this:

1. What is rock climbing?
2. Who is required to follow basic, standard procedures and techniques?
3. Why is he required to follow basic, standard procedures and techniques?
4. What should be prepared by climbers before they ascend a rock face?
5. How is clothing chosen?
6. What sort of clothing can be used for this sport?
7. What should a team of climbers do to climb a sheer rock face?
8. What needs great patience, care and a sound judgement?
9. How do a team of climbers ascend the rock face?
10. What should a team of climbers do from the moment they start their climb until they finish it?
11. How could they maintain their balance?
12. When does the leader of the climb place running belays?
13. Who safeguards him?
14. Why does the second climber belay the leader?

15. Why do climbers have to be physically and mentally tough?
16. Who fixes anchors and lets the second climber ascend?
17. Who takes apart the running belays?
18. Who takes turn to find the next pitches/routes?
19. What process goes on the same way?
20. When can the team enjoy the superb views of nature and breathe fresh air?
21. What does the accomplishment of the climb mean to the team of climbers?

The following is the rough draft:

#### The Benefits of Rock Climbing

*Being a high risk outdoor sport, rock climbing teaches its enthusiasts care, toughness, patience and solidarity among them.* Rock climbing is an activity of climbing sheer rock faces and of testing the climbers' physical and mental strength against tiredness, weather and the danger of gravity. Anyone, who is keen on participating in this sport, not to mention those who are inexperienced, is seriously required to follow basic, standard procedures and techniques. Climbers have to prepare climbing gears such as helmets, harnesses, climbing boots, and so on before they ascend a rock face. Clothing for rock climbing has to be chosen for appropriateness to weather conditions and for freedom of movement. Knickers, loosely-fitting pants or body-hugging tights and t-shirts can be used for this sport. A team of climbers should work together in finding a route to climb a sheer rock face. Determining a climbing route to take in a climb needs great patience, care and a sound judgement. The team of climbers should be extra careful to climb a rock face by using handholds and footholds. From the moment they start a climb until they finish it, the team take care of or protect each other. They should maintain their balance on secure footholds before releasing a handhold to reach for the next ones. When he is climbing, the leader, who is tied to with a rope to the belayer or the second climber, places running belays, a series of devices used to protect the climbers from a fall. The belayer safeguards him. Accordingly, the leader places the running belays in cracks on the rock face. The second climber belays the leader in case he slips off the rock face and falls down, and to prevent him from falling twice the distance between him and the second climber. Climbers have to be physically and mentally tough because moving up a pitch length between the leader and the second climber is often tiring and nerve-racking. Next, the leader fixes anchors and lets the second climber ascend to join him. While he is climbing up, the second climber takes apart the running belays. It is probable that he then takes turn to find the next pitch/route. This kind of process goes on the same way until the team reaches the top of the rock face. When the team is able to accomplish its goal, that is reaching the top of the rock face, they can enjoy the superb view of nature and breathe fresh air. The accomplishment of the climb may also mean that the climbers are able to conquer their egoism, arrogance and individualism since they will always have to exercise mutual dependence, care, patience and solidarity.

The supporting details generated by means of enumeration or listing and/or asking questions result in the rough draft such as written above. Accordingly, since it is still underdeveloped, the rough draft should certainly undergo a revision to make it an effective paragraph below. Notice that repeated keywords, which are underlined, help to unify the supporting sentences to develop the topic sentence. Thus, coherence in the

paragraph below is determined by the repetition of key words on which the development of the central idea depends. The following paragraph has undergone certain revisions.

### The Benefits of Rock Climbing

*Being a high risk outdoor sport, rock climbing teaches its enthusiasts care, toughness, patience and solidarity among them. Rock climbing, the branch of mountaineering, is the activity of climbing rock faces or crags, of pitting the climbers' skills, mental wit and physical stamina against fatigue, weather, falling stones and the obvious danger of gravity. Seeing that it poses danger, anyone, who is keen on participating in this sport, not to mention those who are inexperienced, is seriously required to follow basic, standard procedures and techniques to minimise the imminent risk of slipping or falling off the crag, being hit by falling stones, being trapped in a bad weather or even the worst one, death. Prior to undertaking the activity, climbing gears such as helmets, harnesses, climbing boots, snap-links, ropes, tape slings, chocks and pegs of various types should be prepared and checked to ensure safety. Climbers, too, have to prepare themselves physically and mentally by doing certain physical exercises such as jogging, push up, squat jump, and so forth. Clothing for rock climbing should be chosen for appropriateness to weather conditions and for freedom of movement. Knickers, loosely fitting pants or body-hugging tights combined with jersey t-shirts or sweaters are preferable. To climb a sheer rock face, a team of at least two climbers are to work together in finding one of the routes to go up to the top. Determining which climbing route to take in a climb needs great patience, care and a sound judgement. Otherwise, the team may not be able to go up when the route is unclimbable as there is no crack nor fissure into which pegs or chocks for climbing protection can be placed. Once a climbing route has been chosen, the team should be extra careful to ascend the rock face using handholds and footholds and placing running belays in eyeholes, cracks and fissures on the rock face to protect them during the climb. Consequently, mutual dependence in assurance of safety between the members of the team is beyond questions, for they take care of, or more obviously, protect each other from the moment they start a climb until they finish it. They have to be sure they are in balance on secure footholds before releasing a handhold to reach for the next one. When climbing, the leader of the team, tied into one end of a one-hundred-and-fifty feet nylon rope 10 mm in diameter held by the second climber who safeguards him, places a series of running belays in cracks, eyeholes or fissures and clip the rope to them to prevent him from falling twice the distance between him and the belayer (second climber). If the leader falls, the result may be fatal: bruises, cuts, broken bones or even death. The second climber pays out or takes in the rope patiently, cautiously and vigilantly when the leader ascends, ready to use one of the methods of applying friction with a belaying device in case the leader slips or falls. Moving up a distance between two running belays is often tiring and nerve-racking, and rock climbers, therefore, have to be physically and mentally tough. Having reached a ledge wide enough for the team to rest, the leader fixes some anchors and lets the second climber ascend with great care to join him. While ascending, the second climber, belayed from above by the leader, then takes apart all the running belays. The leader and the second climber may interchangeably take turn to find the next route and thus place and take apart the running belays. Such a process goes on the same way until the team reach the top of the rock face. When the team is able to accomplish its goal, that is reaching the top of the rock face, it is not only fresh air and a superb view of nature both the leader and the second climber can enjoy. However, more importantly, the accomplishment of the climb means not only do*

they pit their climbing skills against the obvious danger of climbing but also they are able to conquer their own selves, their egoism and their individualism, since they will always have to exercise mutual dependence, care, patience, and solidarity.

### 3. Conclusion

Paragraph writing may seem hard to do for some beginning student writers but it is not in the least difficult so long as they are eager to learn enthusiastically and seriously what steps they should take and how sensible and logical they are in applying them. Ignorance of the steps may bring about awkwardness and illegibility in the paragraph they write.

A beginning student writer who wishes to write an effective and readable paragraph calls for sensibility in narrowing down the topic, in formulating the controlling idea, in maintaining coherence among the supporting sentences and drawing a conclusion. Once he is able to apply such techniques as discussed above, he will certainly be able to write a clear, concise and intelligible paragraph.

### References

- Currier, Judy and Marika Simpson. (1990). *A Guide to documenting sources of information*. 2nd ed. Belconnen ACT, Canberra: University of Canberra Library.
- Fawcett, Susan and Alvin Sandberg. (1984). *A Guide to writing: Evergreen*. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Hacker, Diana. (1992). *A Writer's reference*. 2nd ed. Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's.
- Hogue, Ann. (1996). *First steps in academic writing*. White Plains, New York: Longman.
- Kirzner, Laurie G. And Stephen R. Mandell. (1978). *Basic college writing*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Oshima, Alice and Ann Hogue. (1997). *Introduction to academic writing*. 2nd ed. White Plains, New York: Longman.
- Proctor, Paul et.al. (1982). *Longman dictionary of contemporary English*. Harlow, Essex: Longman.
- Ruggiero, Vincent Ryan. (1981). *The Art of writing*. Sherman Oaks, California: Alfred Publishing.
- Wishon, George E. and Julia M. Burks. (1980). *Let's write English*. New York: American Book.



Bambang Suseno is a lecturer at Sinema Academy of Foreign Language, Yogyakarta. He got his Master degree at Gadjah Mada University.



Marita Nurharjanti is a lecturer at Sinema Academy of Foreign Language, Yogyakarta. She earned her Master degree at Sarjana Wiyata Taman Siswa, Yogyakarta.