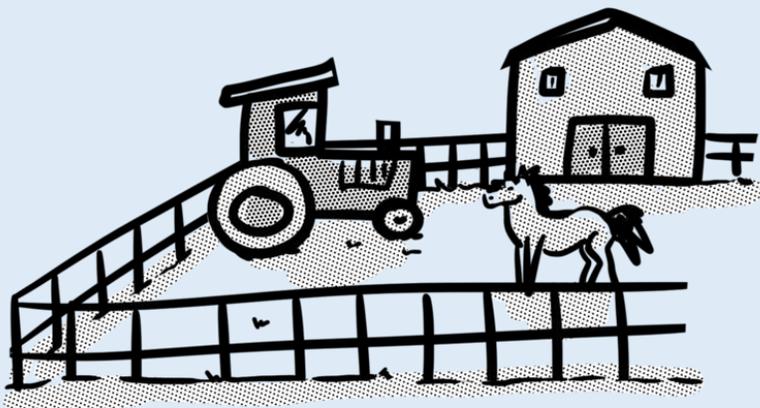


What are paragraphs?

Paragraphs are sections of a piece of writing which contain similar ideas or cover a particular time or scene within a story.



Imagine a farm that keeps many different animals. The farmer probably doesn't want to keep them all together so she will have different fields for her cows, sheep, pigs, horses and so on.

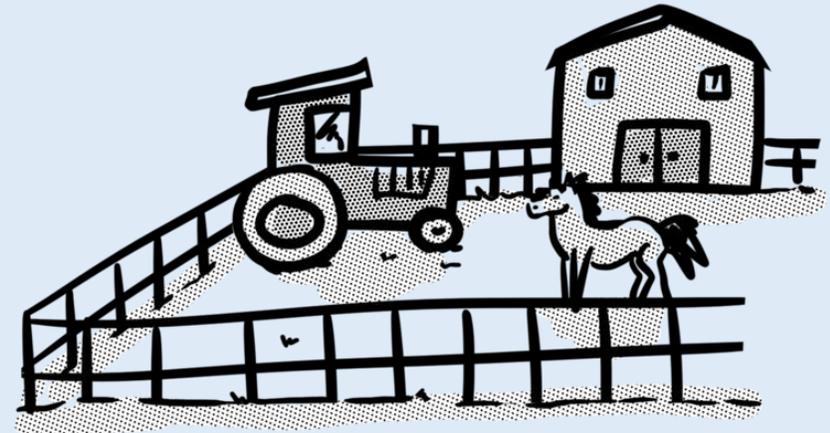
Paragraphs are a bit like fields for writers. They keep similar ideas 'fenced in' together but are all part of the bigger 'farm' – the whole text.

Why link paragraphs?

Even when we organise longer texts into paragraphs, we usually want the reader to be able to pass smoothly from one paragraph to the next.

Thinking back to our farm, the farmer will still want to be able to move from one field to the next, even if she wants to keep her animals separate. That is why she will have gates in the fences between her fields.

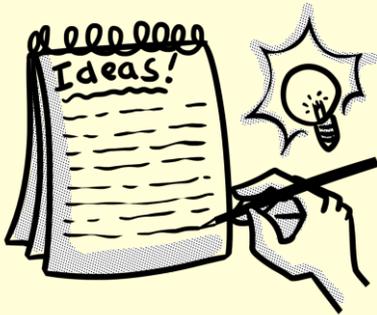
Links between paragraphs in a longer text are like gates between fields in a farm.



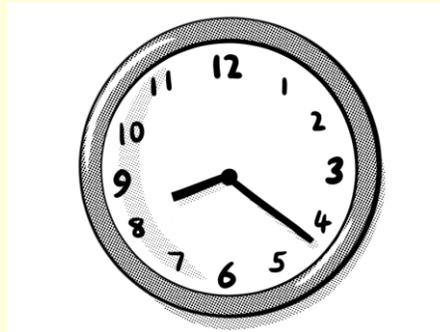
Changing paragraph

Paragraphs contain information that is closely linked. In stories, it can also contain events happening at the same time or in the same place. So, when we are changing paragraphs, it is often to show changes in one of three things:

main idea (subject)



time



place



Breaking for time

If you are writing a story and the action has moved onto another time, you should start a new paragraph. For example:

Having cleaned his teeth, he climbed into bed. He read for a few minutes until his eyes felt heavy. Then, he switched off his light and went to sleep.

There wasn't much for breakfast, as usual. All he could find was an old crust which he toasted and covered with a thin covering of butter.

Without the paragraph break, you might think that he was eating his breakfast in bed, or even while he was sleeping!

Breaking for place

You should also start a new paragraph if the action has moved onto another place. For example:

Sitting on her bed, she stared again at her book. How could this be so hard to understand? Why hadn't she listened better to her teacher's instructions?

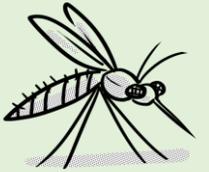
Dad was cooking tea. What's more, he was singing loudly to himself as usual. It really wasn't helping her to concentrate.

Without the paragraph break, you might think that Dad was cooking in her bedroom or that her bed was in the kitchen!

Changing topic

You should also start a new paragraph if you have started a new topic or new aspect of the same topic. This is most clearly demonstrated with non-fiction writing. For example:

Mosquitos are small flying insects. They have one pair of wings and six thin legs. They also have a long, stretched-out mouth part called a proboscis.



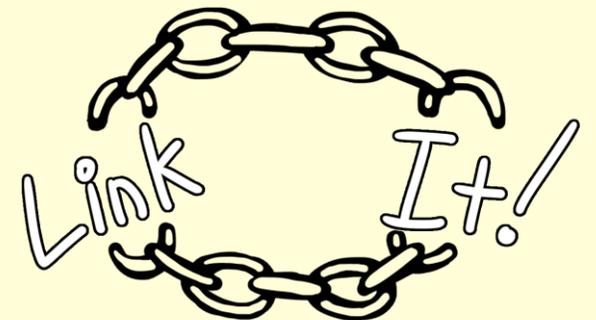
Many types of mosquito feed on the blood of larger animals, including humans. They use their proboscis to puncture the skin and suck up the blood.

Even though both parts were talking about mosquitos, a new paragraph was started when the subject turned from how they look to how they feed.

Linking paragraphs

We show that we are starting new paragraphs by starting a new line and either leaving an extra blank line or starting the first line of the new paragraph a little way in from the left hand margin (indentation). Can you spot which of those two options has been used here?

However, it often helps to give the reader a clear indication of why a new paragraph has been started. This can be in the form of conjunctions or other words such as pronouns that create a link between one paragraph and the next.



Making links between times

You can use conjunctions or other groups of words to show the how the time has shifted from one paragraph to the next. Let's look again at this example:

Having cleaned his teeth, he climbed into bed. He read for a few minutes until his eyes felt heavy. Then, he switched off his light and went to sleep.

***The next morning**, there wasn't much for breakfast, as usual. All he could find was an old crust which he toasted and covered with a thin covering of butter.*

By writing ***The next morning***, the writer has shown how the time has shifted. Other examples of time-linking words include *when, later, next* and so on.

Your turn

Choose a word or group of words from the options below to link these two paragraphs. Click to check.

Finally, Ms Bartoli told the class to clear up. They packed all their books away, put their pencils back into the table tidies and pushed their chairs under.

..... they were lining up at the door ready to leave. They all had their coats on and were carrying their bags.

Afterwards,

Five minutes later,

The next day,

When,

Making links between places

Different conjunctions or groups of words can show the reader how the place has shifted from one paragraph to the next. Let's look again at this example:

Sitting on her bed, she stared again at her book. How could this be so hard to understand? Why hadn't she listened better to her teacher's instructions?

***In the kitchen**, Dad was cooking tea. What's more, he was singing loudly to himself as usual. It really wasn't helping her to concentrate.*

By writing ***In the kitchen***, the writer has shown how the place has shifted. Other examples might include *next door, across town, far away* and so on.

Your turn

Choose a group of words from the options below to link these two paragraphs.
Click to check.

Daphne was trying her hardest to sleep. She knew she had to get up early the next morning and was beginning to worry that she would be too tired.

..... the neighbours were having a party. Thumping music was blaring out of the windows and people were talking loudly in the garden.

Across town,

In the bathroom,

Next door,

Miles away,

Making links between places

Pronouns are often used to make links between paragraphs when the focus has shifted to a different aspect of the same topic. Let's look again at this example:

Mosquitos are small flying insects. They have one pair of wings and six thin legs. They also have a long, stretched-out mouth part called a proboscis.

*Many types of **them** feed on the blood of larger animals, including humans. They use their proboscis to puncture the skin and suck up the blood.*

By writing **them** instead of **mosquito**, the writer has created a link between the two paragraphs whilst changing the focus from appearance to feeding habits.

Your turn

Can you identify the pronoun that is used to form a link between these two paragraphs? Click to check.

Magnets are objects that have a magnetic field. Even though you can't see it, this field creates a force that pulls certain materials towards them.

***They** can also attract each other. However, that only works if **they** are the right way round, especially if you are using ones that are shaped like a bar. Otherwise, **they** will push away or 'repel' each other.*



Review

- Paragraphs are used to organise our writing.
- Each paragraph should contain connected information.
- You should start a new paragraph when you change the time, place or topic (or aspect of a topic) you are writing about.
- Conjunctions and other linking words and phrases show how you have shifted time or place.
- Pronouns can show how different paragraphs in information texts are linked.