Introduction to Technical Writing
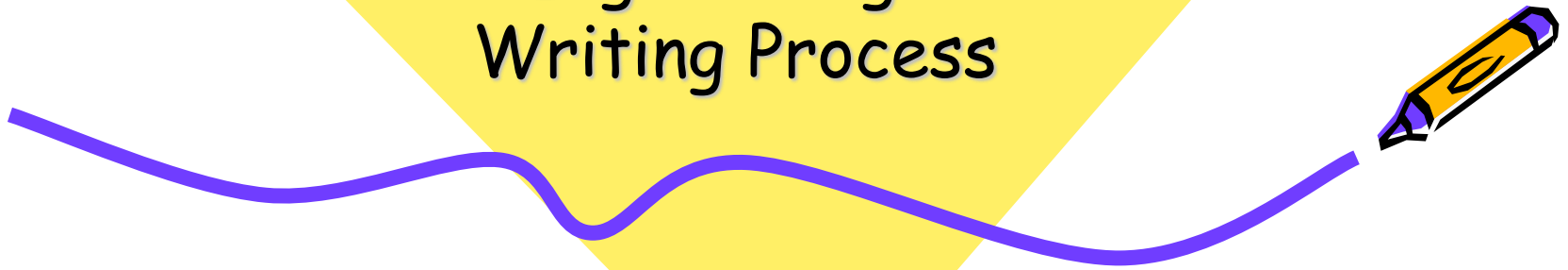
1st Year Engineering Students
Effective Writing

Technical Writing Iman
ElMahallawi, BUE

Introduction to Technical Writing

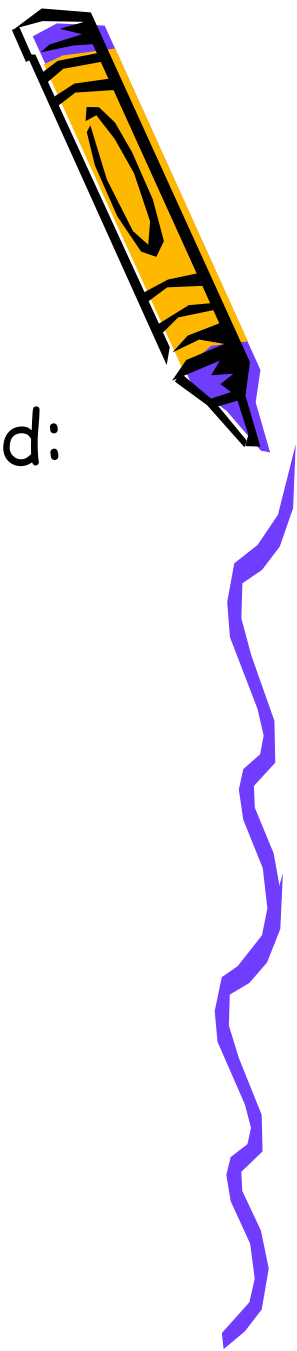## 1st Year Engineering Students
Writing Process

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REFERENCES

- Leo Finkelstein, Jr.; Pocket Book of Technical Writing for Engineers and Scientists, McGraw-Hill's Best, 2005.

- Technical & Business Writing (ENGL 2311 at ACC).htm

- Communications\Introduction to Communication Skills - Mind Tools.htm

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Effective Sentences

Effective sentences should be correct and:

1. Have unity of idea,
2. Emphasize the right parts,
3. Show cohesion between parts,
4. Be precise in meaning,
5. Be concise,
6. Show word propriety,
7. Be clear in meaning, show variety in structure.

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Characteristics of Effective Technical Writing

The four C's:

- **Clarity** -- it is easily understood by your intended audience

- **Comprehensiveness** -- all of the necessary information is present

- **Conciseness** -- it is clear without excess verbiage

- **Correctness** -- it is grammatical and follows conventions

Effective paragraphs

- A paragraph is a group of sentences tied by one main idea. A paragraph has:
- Structure: A topic statement that ties all sentences.
- Form: marked by using indentations.
- Length 50 to 250 words, 2-16 sentence.
- In technical writing these paragraphs need to be effective.
- An effective paragraph should have some characteristics as follows:
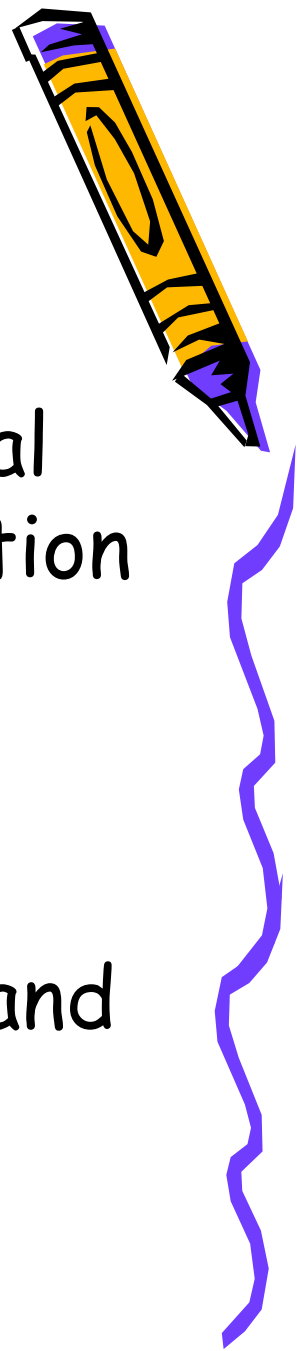
Effective paragraphs

- Unity: focuses on the topic.
- Coherence: continuity of the thought.
- Adequate content:
- Adequate development.
- Adequate pattern of organization.

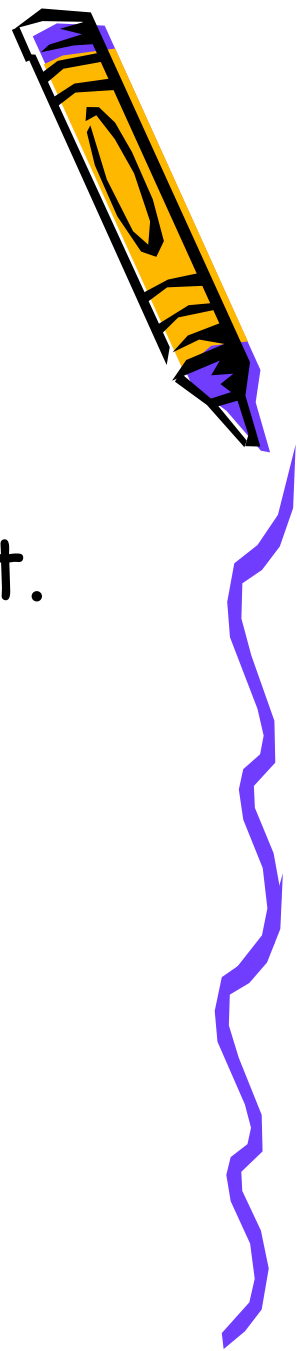Paragraphs fall into four types; Beginning, Body, Concluding, and transitional.

How to write effective paragraphs?

- The first step in writing a technical report, essay, article, or presentation is to write a paragraph.

- A PARAGRAPH is a group of sentences tied by one main idea.
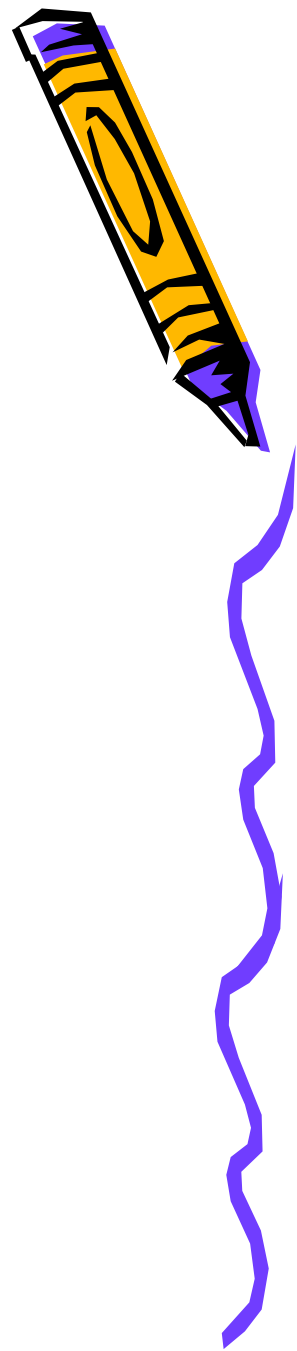
- Paragraphs have structure, form, and length.

TYPES OF PARAGRAPHS

- Beginning (introductory, starting).
- Body (normal paragraph in the text.
- Concluding (ending, closing).
- Transitional.

Opening Paragraph

- The opening paragraph should:
- Capture reader's interest.
- Announce the topic.
- Define the problem.
- Define the background.
- Present the thesis statement.
- State purpose or scope.
- Present the text contents.

How to develop opening paragraph

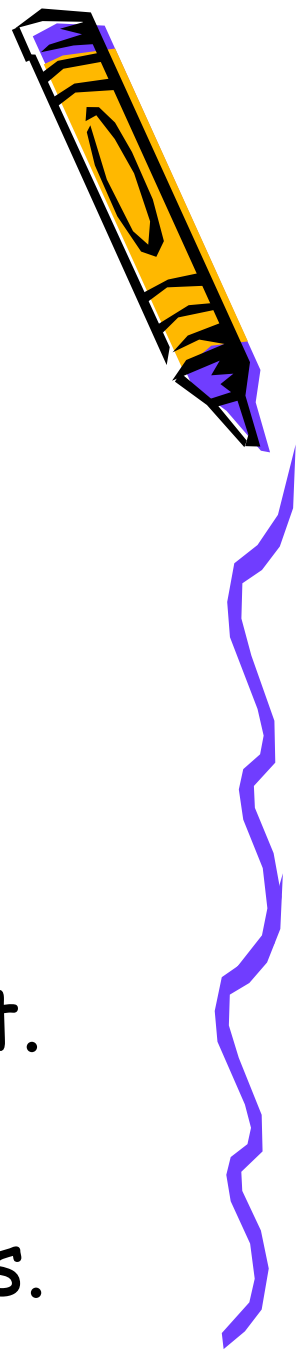The opening paragraph should have the following structure:

Introduce topic + prepare for the thesis.

or

Write the thesis + shortly develop it.

or

Use both techniques for 2 sentences.

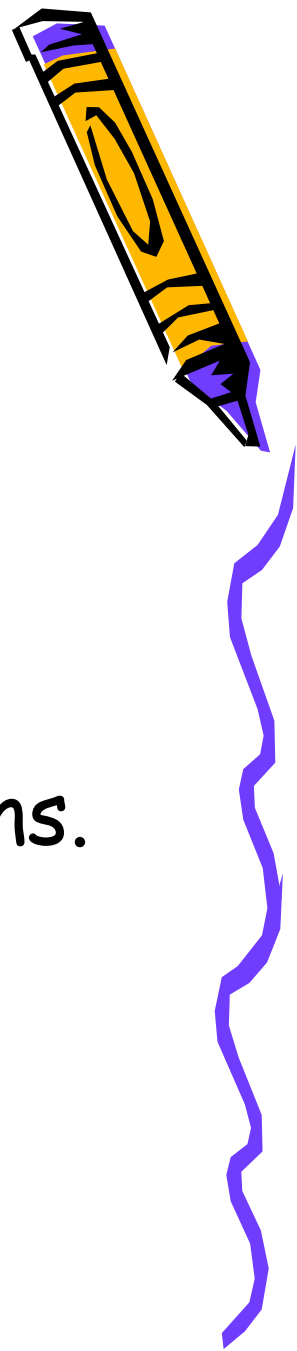# How to develop closing paragraph

The closing paragraph:
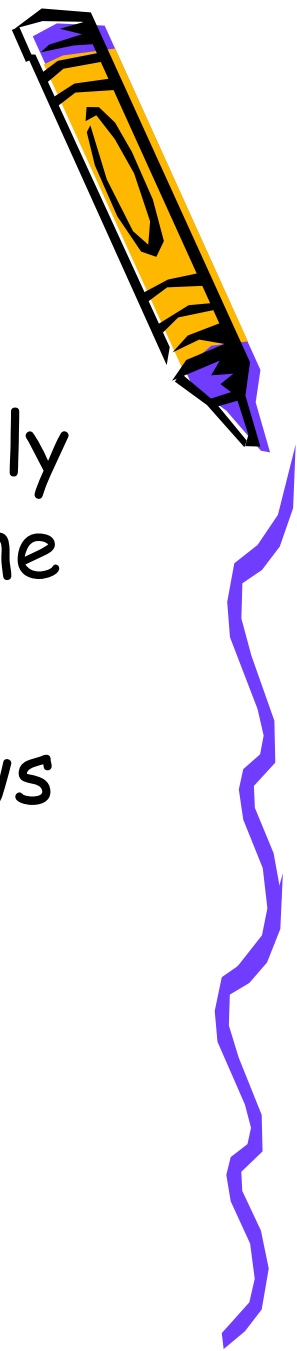
- Restates thesis + conclusion.

or

- Discusses significance + implications.

or

- May call for actions or recommendations.

How to develop transitional paragraphs

- The transitional paragraph is usually a short paragraph consisting of one sentence.

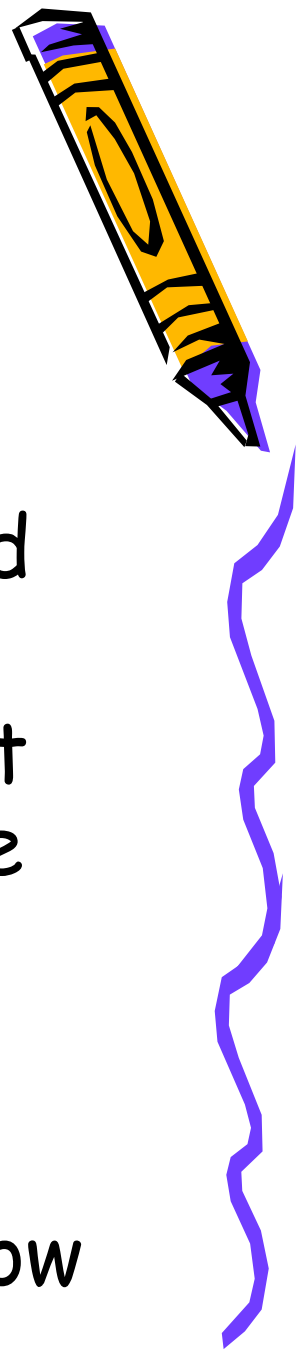- It sums up previous topic and shows where to go next.

Body paragraphs

- Body paragraphs carry the message of the text which is usually called a thesis statement.

- The thesis statement is developed through the whole text. The text consists of a number of paragraphs.

- Each paragraph consists of a topic sentence and a number of related sentences developed so that they are logically tied to the topic sentence.
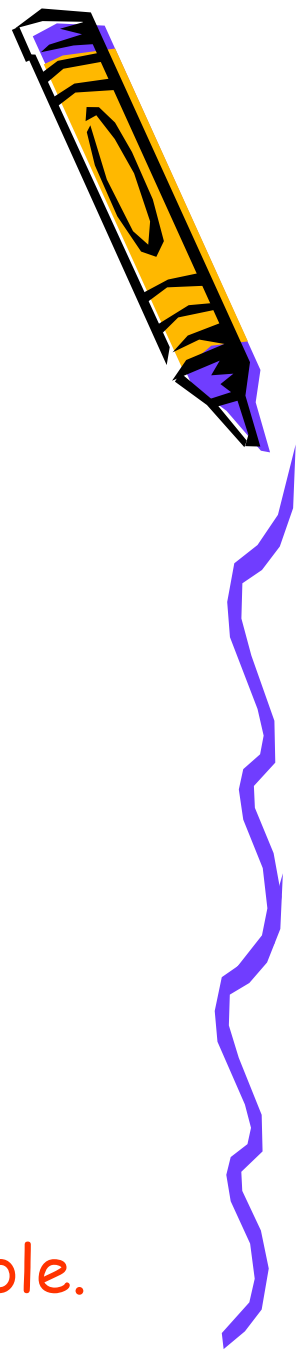
How to develop an effective paragraph?

- TOPIC SENTENCE is the core.
- The other sentences are developed to stress the topic sentence.
- The topic sentence may be place at the beginning, end or middle of the paragraph.
- The topic sentence controls other sentences.
- These other sentences should follow a certain pattern.

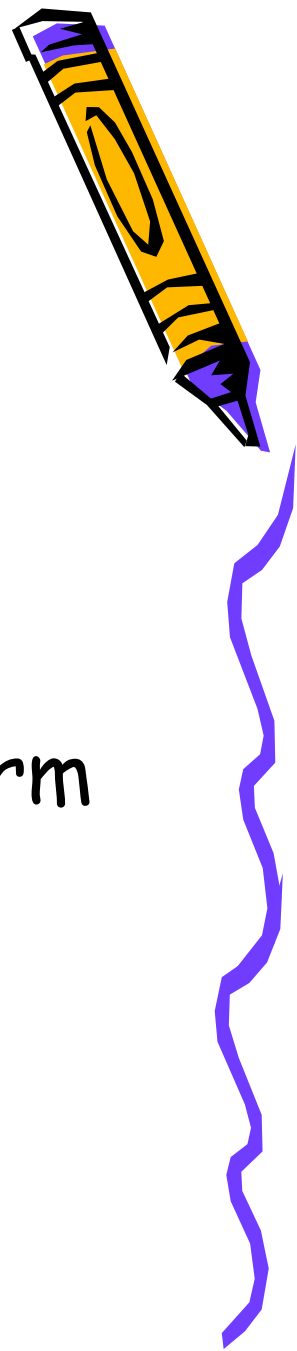# Commonly used patterns for developing paragraphs

- Narration.
- Description.
- Classification/division.
- Definition.
- Process.
- Analysis (cause and effect).
- Comparison/contrast/analogy.
- Listing, illustrating.
- General-to-particular.
- Background.

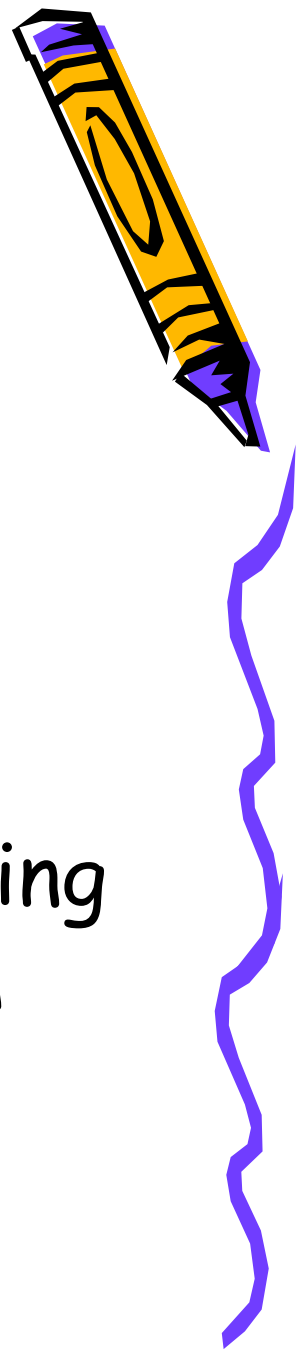A combination of more than one method is possible.

Do not forget that after developing the paragraph it should:

- Show unity.
- Emphasize the right topic.
- Show cohesion.
- Include variety in the sentence form and structure.
- Show adequate content.
- Show adequate development technique.
- Show adequate pattern of organization.

Note!

- Unity is disturbed by grammatical and sentence mistakes as well as unrelated thoughts.

- Cohesion is achieved through maintaining a clear pattern, and using specific transition elements within and between the sentences.