

One morning I was walking to school. I thought about the summer holidays. My mother wants the family to stay at home in the summer. My mother likes her home. She likes to stay at home. She has a lot of work to do in the house. She doesn't go out very much in the evening. My father wants the family to go abroad in his new car. It is an English car. He bought it a few months ago. It is very comfortable. He is very proud of it. I don't want to do what they want to do. I want to get a job in a garage. I like working in my holidays. (115 words)

This is a bad paragraph because:

1. Apart from the sentence *I don't want to do what they want to do* it is written in simple sentences only.
2. There are no connecting words.
3. What is the controlling idea? If it is "thinking about the summer holidays" how do the sentences *she has a lot of work to do in the house, she doesn't go out very much in the evening, it is an English car, he bought it a few months ago*, fit in?
4. Does the reader really know what this paragraph is about? What is the topic of the composition it is taken from? *The Holidays? My Mother and Her Home? My Father's Car?*

It would be possible to make this bad example into a good paragraph by using carefully chosen connecting words and phrases in order to relate the information about mother and the home and father and his car to the controlling idea of summer holidays, but the paragraph would be more than twice as long!

Topic sentence: One morning I was walking to school,
thinking about the summer holidays.
One morning I was walking to school, thinking about
the summer holidays. My mother wanted the family to
stay at home, but my father thought we should all go
abroad in his new car. On the other hand, my ideas
5 didn't include them at all! I had already arranged to
work in a garage in the neighbouring town, and I had
promised two schoolfriends to go camping later in the
summer. However, I hadn't told my parents about these
plans. What would they say when I did? No wonder the
10 holidays filled my thoughts that morning! (96 words)

Notes on the above model

1. The topic sentence suggests that the paragraph is going to describe the writer's thoughts about his summer holidays.

Everything in the sentences that follow should be related to this "topic".

2. Connecting words and phrases used:

line 3: *but*

line 4: *on the other hand*

line 6: *and*

line 8: *however*

line 9: *when*

line 9: *no wonder*

3. Other ways of connecting sentences used:

line 1: *thinking*. Two simple sentences (*One morning I was walking to school. I was thinking about the summer holidays*) are joined by using a comma followed by a participial construction.

lines 2 - 4: two simple sentences (*My mother wanted the family to stay at home. My father wanted the family to go abroad*) are joined by using *but* and the pronoun *we*.

line 5: the pronoun *them*

lines 8 & 9: *these plans*

line 10: *that* refers back to the opening sentence.