Paragraph Coherence: Paragraph Breaks

Purpose: Upon completion of this activity, students will understand the elements of a paragraph and will know when to start a new paragraph when writing multi-paragraph pieces. This DLA should take approximately 15 to 30 minutes to complete.

1. Visit http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/606/01/ and read about paragraphs and paragraphing. Pay special attention to the section at the bottom of the page entitled “How do I know when to start a new paragraph?”

2. Read the attached paragraph (from the sample CAHSEE tests online). Using the proofreader’s mark for paragraphing (¶), mark where this long paragraph should be broken up into three separate paragraphs.

3. Before reviewing your answers with an instructor or tutor, use the space below to write any questions you still have about paragraphing:

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

4. Review your answers with an instructor or tutor in the WRC. Have that person sign and date this sheet.

Attach a confirmation sheet or get a signature below:

Instructor Signature: _______________________________ Date: ____________________
Some days, I go to school, and on the way to school, I think that there is nowhere else in the world I
would rather be. No matter what time of year it is, I walk through the neighborhoods, and every
morning, I see the same people I always see: the tiny old lady walking what may be the tiniest dog in the
world, the man at the newsstand with the walrus mustache, the skipping twins on their way to the bus
stop. I don’t know any of their names or where they live, or what their favorite foods are, or what they
think about anything, but these are people I’ve known forever. In a strange way, I think of them as my
friends. Every day, I smile at them, and they smile at me. The man at the newsstand says “Buenos días”
in his deep voice and will sometimes comment on the weather in Spanish because years and years ago I
told him that my parents spoke Spanish too, and he told me I needed to learn. When it rains, the old
lady with the dog always scolds me and tells me I should carry an umbrella. And school—it’s the same.
What I like best is the routine: homeroom, English, biology, physical education, lunch, math, and social
studies, then soccer practice after school. I see the same people at school every day, sit next to the same
people in my classes, eat lunch with my same friends. I have friends I have known as long as I can
remember. It’s as comfortable as being at home. My parents moved into our house before I was born. I
know everything there is to know about our street. The oak tree in the yard has a tree house that my
father built when I was six. The sidewalk is cracked in front of our neighbors’ house from the big
earthquake; we use the uneven pavement as a skate ramp. If you run past the tall fence in front of the
big white house on the corner, you can see through the fence as if it didn’t exist.