Features of an academic paragraph - Main Body 1

1. Read the example Main Body 1 paragraph below.

The development of the Silk Road took place over a long period of time between the East and West as a result of growing trade. It began to develop over 2000 years ago and lasted for approximately 1600 years. In fact, the Silk Road originated during the Han dynasty in China around 250BCE and the height of the ‘Road’s growth was in the 8th century during the Tang dynasty (T2). The route began in the East in the Chinese city of Xian and it moved westward to connect with the Mediterranean world. The Silk Road developed as three smaller routes that joined together rather than one main route (T4). These smaller routes passed through many cities such as kashgar, Isfahan, Baghdad and Istanbul. The Silk Road developed in response to the strong demand from the Romans and Persians for Chinese silk and other products (T1). At this time, the economies along the trading routes were stable, and in particular, China positively encouraged commerce and exchange between East and West (T2).

Topic sentences

A topic sentence is usually the first sentence in an academic paragraph. It tells the reader the main idea of the paragraph. Topic sentences have two elements: the topic and the controlling idea. The controlling idea limits the topic and can be general or specific.

1. Read the two examples below and underline the topic and highlight the control

The development of the Silk Road has a number of different features.

The development of the Silk Road took place over a long period of time between the East and West as a result of growing trade.

Which of the topic sentences is general and which is specific?

2. Write a general and specific topic sentence for MB2 Uses of the Silk Road.

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Which of the topic sentences is general and which is specific?

Make any necessary corrections to the topic sentence in your MB2 Uses paragraph.
Paragraph Structure

Academic paragraphs contain a lot of information and need to be organized clearly to help the reader. Below is one way of organizing information in a paragraph:

Main Idea

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific Examples</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A paragraph could just contain one idea with an explanation and examples or more than one idea with a number of explanations and examples.

1. Identify and annotate; the main idea, general explanations and specific examples in the MB1 paragraph above.

2. Check your MB2 paragraph. Underline any general explanations and highlight any specific examples. Make any necessary corrections or add new points.

Transitions – for identifying ‘examples’

1. Highlight any transitions that have been used to signal ‘examples’ in the text.

2. List the transitions below and add any others you can think of.

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

3. Check your MB2 paragraph. Underline any transitions that you have used to signal ‘examples’. Make any necessary corrections or annotate any new transitions.
Remember: Don’t over use transitions; use a variety of transitions; use a transition with the correct meaning.

**Referencing Key Words**

1. Look again at the paragraph you read at the top of the page. Highlight the key word (the Silk Road) or any words that are a reference to this. List them below.

2. Highlight the key word in the paragraph below. What do you notice about the use of the key word? Which paragraph is better? Why?

The development of the Silk Road took place over a long period of time between the East and West as a result of growing trade. The Silk Road began to develop over 2000 years ago and lasted for approximately 1600 years. In fact, the Silk Road originated during the Han dynasty in China and the height of the Silk Road’s growth was in the 8th century during the Tang dynasty (T2). The Silk Road began in the East in the Chinese city of Xian and the Silk Road moved westward to connect with the Mediterranean world. The Silk Road developed as three smaller routes that joined together rather than one main route (T4). These smaller routes passed through many cities such as Kashgar, Isfahan, Baghdad and Istanbul. The Silk Road developed in response to the strong demand from the Romans and Persians for Chinese silk and other products (T1). At this time, the economies along the Silk Road were stable, and in particular, China positively encouraged commerce and exchange between East and West (T2).

You should try to use a variety of different ways to write the key word in your paragraph. It shows good vocabulary and make the text more interesting for the reader.

3. Check your MB2 paragraph. **Underline** the key word and any references words to it that you have used. Make any necessary corrections or annotate any new references.