**What is a paragraph?**

One of the central components of a paper is the paragraph. When most students think of a paragraph, they hold onto the old myths about length: a paragraph is at least 5 sentences, a paragraph is half a page, etc. A paragraph, however, is "a group of sentences or a single sentence that forms a unit" (Lunsford and Connors 116). Length or appearance is **not** a factor in determining whether a section in a paper is a paragraph. In fact, it is not the number of sentences that construct a paragraph, but the unity and coherence of ideas among those sentences. For instance, in some styles of writing, particularly journalistic styles, a paragraph can be one sentence. Ultimately, strong paragraphs contain a sentence or sentences unified around one central, controlling idea. When the paragraph reaches completion, it should serve to bring the reader into your paper and guide his/her understanding of what has been read. Whether that completion happens with one sentence or with twenty, the end result is still a paragraph.