Paragraphs and Paragraph Development

1) What is a paragraph?

A group of sentences held together by a common theme.

2) Why have paragraphs?

a) pool similar points and ideas together
b) provide visual break and aesthetics

3) How many kinds of paragraphs?

a) introductory paragraphs
b) body paragraphs
c) concluding paragraphs.

4) What is development?

a) fleshing out your ideas
b) clarifying and refining thought

Strategies for developing paragraphs:

- Giving examples
- Describing an object, person, situation
- Defining a term or concept
- Discovering causes and effects
- Narrating an event
- Comparing and Contrasting
- Dividing and Classifying
- Arguing a point

Minimum requirements of a paragraph:
1) Make a point

2) Prove the point

3) Have opening and closing sentences

4) Have logical connection and/or external glue to bind/cohere thoughts/sentences together.

Stephen King, the king of the horror genre, says “the paragraph not the sentence is the basic unit of writing” and “the place where coherence begins and words stand a chance of becoming more than words. If the moment of quickening is to come, it comes at the level of the paragraph. It is a marvelous and flexible instrument … You must learn to use it well if you are to write well. What this means is lots of practice; you have to learn the beat” (134).

Further Reading: If you wish to learn more about the craft of writing, read Stephen King’s On Writing or come by the Writing Center at B 222A. To make appointments for writing and other subject matter consultations please go to: www.usfsm.edu/infocommons/appointment/php; for more information about Learning Support Services please call: (941) 359-4323.