Writing an essay or paper can become simpler by following tips on getting started and by keeping organized. Here are four basic steps that will help you begin a paper and assist you with your writing structure.

1. **Prewriting**
   
a. Consider your purpose of writing and plan what to say.
b. Brainstorm or make a list of what you want to talk about.
c. Organize your thoughts by rewriting your list in the order in which you wish to write or make an outline to organize your thoughts.

2. **Drafting**
   
   Use your list or outline to write sentences and paragraphs. Don’t worry about spelling or grammar errors here. They will be fixed later.

3. **Revising**
   
   Add, remove, replace, or rearrange the sentences to make more sense.

4. **Editing**
   
   Look at what you have written and make corrections in grammar (such as spelling, punctuation, capitalization or word choice). Sometimes it makes it easier if you print before this step and edit on paper first, then make changes on the computer. Many times it helps to set the paper aside and return to it later with a fresh outlook. This way one can spot errors which might have previously been overlooked.
Structuring a Paragraph:

A **paragraph** is a set of related sentences that develop a central point or main idea.

In order to write a well-formed paragraph, you need to be able to tell the difference between an effective and ineffective paragraph. An effective paragraph contains a **topic sentence**.

A **topic sentence** tells the reader what the rest of the paragraph is about. The other sentences in the paragraph are supporting sentences.

If you think of a paragraph as a building, then the topic sentence is the roof, and the supporting sentences are like the columns that support the roof.

Example:

> Video game systems are no longer just a mindless way for teens to spend a Saturday evening. With its interactive features and games ranging from ping-pong to boxing, the Wii game system is now being used in senior housing as a non-strenuous physical activity. Other game systems are also incorporating puzzles and brainteasers into their games which challenge player’s intellect. One of the biggest changes in gaming are the game systems specifically designed and geared to teach children math, reading, spelling and second languages.

In the example, the Topic Sentence is the shaded sentence. The other two sentences support the topic sentence and explain why classic movies are being remade.

*Source: Contemporary’s Writing Skills
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