**When any of the following occur in your writing, you need to start a new paragraph:**

* **You introduce a new idea:**This applies mainly to essay writing where each main point in support of your argument should have its own paragraph.
* **A new character is introduced:** Whenever someone new enters a story or whenever the focus shifts from one character to another, you need to start a new paragraph.
* **You begin to discuss a new event:** Whether you are writing a short story or discussing historical events in an essay, each unique situation should have its own paragraph.
* **The setting changes:** When writing short stories, you need to start a new paragraph whenever your story moves to a new location.
* **A new person begins speaking:** This rule is essential to keep in mind when you are writing dialogue for a short story. Start a new paragraph whenever the speaker changes even if the previous person only spoke a few words.
* **Time moves forward or backward a lot:** Whenever there is a major time shift in your story or essay, you need to start a new paragraph.