When presenting material, authors use several kinds of paragraph patterns. One, the question and answer pattern, starts with a question and continues with statements that answer it. A second type is the statement and support pattern, where authors state an idea and follow it with sentences that provide supporting details.

A third paragraph form is the conclusion and proof pattern. This is similar to the statement and support pattern in that it is a statement followed by supporting ideas. The difference is that in this third type, the authors are stating a conclusions they have reached and are adding additional ideas to convince you to share their conclusions.

In the following example of a conclusion and proof paragraph, the conclusion is printed in italics, and the proofs are underlined.

Today people listen to the radio for continuous news broadcasts and the top music hits of the week. During the 1920s people listened to old-time radio, a wonderful theater of sound. *In its heyday, radio had a spell-binding power that has probably not been equaled since ancient storytellers foretold the future around campfires. It is not just chance that old radios were often shaped like cathedrals. Listeners huddled around them like devout congregations at worship.*

The author’s conclusion about old-time radio is that it had an enormous effect, bordering on worship, on its listeners. The author supports this by noting that radios resembled cathedrals in shape, and that listeners used to gather around their radios almost like worshipers.

Read the following paragraph about why workers join unions. As you read, try to identify the conclusion and the proof.

One of the main reasons that workers join unions is to gain strength to bargain with employers for higher wages and better working conditions. If workers are not organized, the terms of employment are decided solely by the employer. A worker bargaining alone who feels entitled to a raise or a company pension plan has little chance of gaining such benefits if the employer does not want to grant them. Even if the worker confronts the employer with threats of quitting, the employer stands firm, knowing that others can fill the void and continue operating until a new worker is hired.

The conclusion in this paragraph is the sentence, “If workers are not organized, the terms of employment are decided solely by the employer.” The author supports this by the two sentences that follow, which point out that a worker bargaining alone has little chance of gaining benefits the employer does not want to grant, even if the worker threatens to quit.

Recognizing conclusion and proof paragraphs will help you to organize and understand what you read.
1. Read the following paragraphs. Draw one line under the conclusion in each, and two lines under the sentences the author includes as proof.

   a. In Japan a psychiatrist found that many left-handed children were being affected negatively by being forced to use their right hand. The Japanese prejudice against left-handers has existed for a longer time than anyone can remember. In some areas where teachers used to beat southpaw pupils, children would feign right-handedness to avoid beatings. Fewer than two percent of the population will admit to being left-handed.

   b. Mention Kenya to most people and they think of safaris, journeys through wild game preserves, and close-up views of exotic forms of wildlife. They would not think of vacationing on the seashore of this beautiful African country. Yet Kenya’s coast, in fact, is one of the most beautiful in the world. Here coconut palms line beaches where the sand is a blinding white and the sea a clear, azure blue. One can swim underwater to see the colorful creatures that inhabit the coral reef. Or one may watch from the shore the distant sails of Arab trading ships.

The following paragraphs include conclusions made by the author, which are underlined. Below there is a list of proofs, each of which belongs to one of the conclusions. Fill in the blanks with a or b to indicate where each proof belongs.

   a. Terrorism was so commonplace in 1973 that only the most spectacular exploits made the newscasts. Between the commercials, embassies were sacked, hostages were killed, travelers were massacred at the Rome airport, and Beirut was penetrated by commandos who executed enemies in their beds. There seemed little doubt that the terrorism would continue into 1974.

   b. The men and women who engage in acts of terror differ from country to country. Their educational backgrounds may be totally dissimilar and their places on the economic ladder uneven. Nonetheless, there are threads of outlook and behavior that establish a pattern among terrorists.

   ______ 2. A prominent Jewish Londoner who had aided the Israelis was shot on New Year’s Eve and there were reports of an Arab death squad loose in the city.

   ______ 3. Early in January the British Army went to the extraordinary length of ringing Heathrow airport with light tanks and armored cars to thwart a reported plot by terrorists to shoot down an American or Israeli commercial plane.

   ______ 4. The typical leader of a terrorist movement is a radical intellectual, fired by patriotism and a sense of social injustice, or both. He or she is thwarted by political defeats and frustrations, turning more and more toward violence.

   ______ 5. Ghassan Kanafani, a spokesman for the extremist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, was a gentle-mannered novelist.