

In the above example, you will notice that the three specific sentences support the general statement (topic sentence) that “Marie always had an artistic inclination.”

One of the characteristics of paragraphs is the combination of *general* and *specific* statements.

CHAPTER THREE

The Writing Process: Steps in Paragraph Development

A paragraph consists of several sentences that develop one main idea. A paragraph may be a complete composition in itself, or it may be part of a longer composition. In either case, the process of writing a well-developed paragraph consists of three steps.

Consider the following steps:

Step 1: The main idea of a paragraph is the general statement that the other sentences explain. The main idea is expressed in the **topic sentence**.

Step 2: Supporting sentences explain the main idea. The supporting sentences are specific rather than general and develop the main idea by examining it in more detail. It is also referred as the body of the paragraph.

Step 3: The conclusion, a **concluding sentence**, restates the main idea expressed in the topic sentence. It is general rather than specific.

It is important to note that while the process of writing a well-developed paragraph has three steps, the process is not complete until the paragraph undergoes editing and revision. **Revision** is an essential component in the composing process.

A Handbook from the Writing Center

Assignment

Write a two-page essay on any one of the following topics:

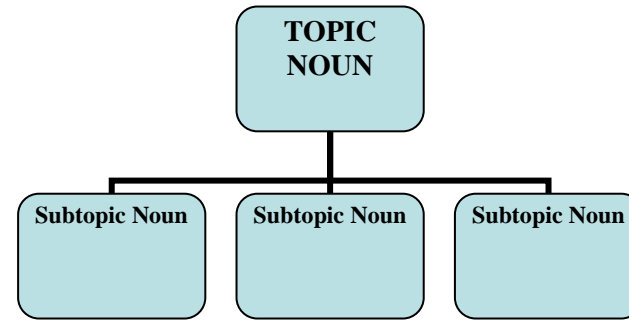
1. Define a “third world” country.
2. Compare and contrast the mandatory education in Japan with that of the US.
3. Persuade the members of the School Committee to allocate money for a new playground.

Written by Dr. Everest Onuoha

Roxbury Community College
2008

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Products or Services	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Order Form.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.



Pattern B is logically correct. Subtopics always name smaller categories that fit into larger categories named by topics. Subtopic nouns name specific examples of topic nouns. When related topics are consistently by subtopics, a paragraph or essay becomes coherent. Coherent writing is clear writing because all of the ideas fit together in a logical way.

CHAPTER TWO

General and Specific Statements

In Chapter One we examined nouns (topics) that name a general category of items (vegetables, meat, fruit, etc.) and subtopic nouns that name specific examples of the general category nouns (milk, plum, bacon, etc.) Similarly, statements like nouns can be categorized as general or specific as in the following example:

General statement: Marie always had an artistic inclination.

Specific statements:

1. When she was four years old, she would eagerly sing solo renditions of “There was an Old Man who had a Wooden Leg.”
2. The following year, however, Marie quit soloing and took refuge in Miss Zimmer’s Kindergarten chorus.
3. The piano was next, followed by a serious attempt at the clarinet in Mr. Smith’s Eighth Grade orchestra.

Soft drinks

Pepsi
Coke
7-UP

Bakery goods

Pie
Cake
Cookies

Vegetables

Chard
Green beans
Squash

Dairy products

Milk
Eggs
Cheese

Meat

Hamburger
Lamb chops
Bacon

Fruit

Plums
Oranges
Lemons

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one way to send a message. There are other ways, of course, such as speech and the body language of facial expressions and gesture. Writing, however, is more demanding than face-to-face communication. A speaker can instantly reword his message, change his tone of voice, or add emphasis with a gesture when he sees that his message is not getting through. A writer does not normally have such instant feedback. If a writer fails to get his message clearly and accurately on paper, the message will be garbled or misinterpreted. Accurate writing demands *careful selection of words*. Clear writing demands *logical patterning of ideas*. The following chapters are designed to help you become proficient in the techniques and patterns that make writing clear. The chapters are arranged in a sequence.

Each new chapter builds on skills previously learned. By the time you complete the final chapter, you will be able to write effective, well developed and logical paragraph with a new sense of confidence and competence. We will begin with the Rhetorical Triangle and The Logical Basis of Paragraphing.

Everest Onuoha
Spring 2008

Notice that each heading (Vegetables, Meat, Fruits, etc.) is a noun that names a topic. Each indented word (Milk, Plums, Bacon, etc.) is a noun that names a subtopic. Which noun names a larger category of items, a topic noun or a subtopic noun? Which pattern is logically correct, A or B?

CHAPTER 1

The Logical Basis of Paragraphing

Idea Patterning

Without a pattern, bits of information make little sense. Disconnected items seem illogical and unclear. Notice this in the following series of numbers:

10 2 12 6 4 18 14 8 16 20

Do these numbers make much sense? How logical does the series seem to be?

Now look at the same numbers arranged in a different pattern:

2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20

Does this pattern make more sense? If so, why?

The second series makes more sense because it follows a recognizable pattern: ascending order of magnitude by two's. Similarly, when the ideas in a paragraph follow a pattern, the paragraph makes sense. The paragraph seems clear and logical. What patterns of ideas produce clear paragraphs? Topic patterns do. To illustrate topical patterning of ideas, look at the following topics:

Soft drinks
Bakery goods
Vegetables
Dairy products
Meat
Fruit

Now think of three items that would logically fit under each topic.

Write the items in the following blanks:

Soft drinks

Bakery goods

Dairy products

Meat

Fruit

Does your list look something like the following?

READING SELECTION: “The Commuter”

1. *Just what is a commuter, besides a rider of trains? Let’s look at him.*

2. *The commuter is distinguished from other mortals by (perhaps most notably) his remarkable vigor. Under physical and psychic strains, which might easily prove too much for the average urbanite or countryman, he not only survives but he thrives.*

3. *The physical strains of his life start early each working day. On the average he rises an hour before his urban fellow workers, dresses and breakfasts more quickly, drives from half a mile to ten miles to a station, rides a train for at least a half hour – and only then copes with the city transportation which takes his non-commuting colleagues from home to office. In the evening the process is reversed, and he has barely climbed from his car at an hour when city people have already been happily relaxed for an hour or two. His dinner is usually correspondingly late, and either his postprandial leisure or his sleep is accordingly curtailed. In the wintertime he may seldom see his home by daylight until the weekend. He enjoys certain advantages in the summer, but he continues to pay heavily for them.*

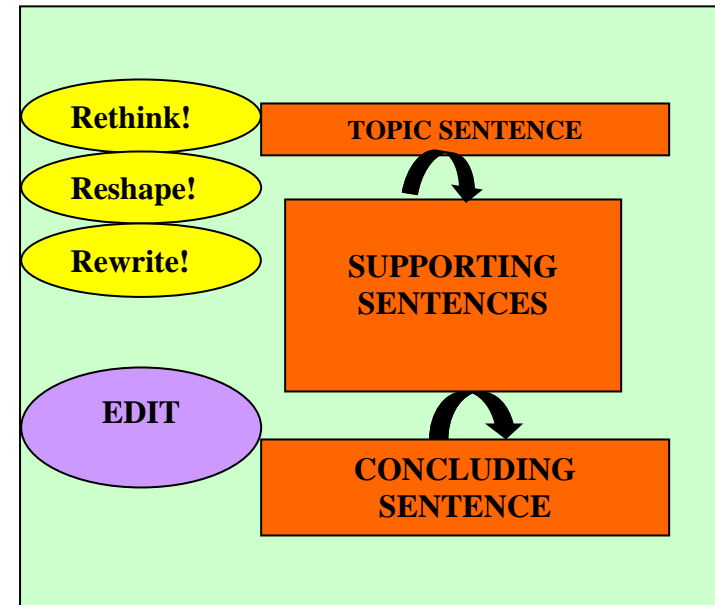
4. *Every commuter suffers additional physical strains to varying degrees in the daily need to keep up his home and grounds, an endless and never completed series of major and minor chores only some of which his pride and finances allow him to delegate to paid help, which is generally scarce, incompetent, overpaid, and contrary. Furthermore, no matter how much he enjoys doing things himself... he doesn’t invariably enjoy it to the same degree, and there are times when it is downright irksome-but there the chores are, always, waiting for him.*

5. *There are other physical attritions to which he is subject, frequently self-imposed under the correct, or mistaken, notion that they are fun. These include such weekend activities as outdoor sports and games, for which his weekly sedentary life leaves him physically unfit and unprepared, and whose sole advantage is*

The Four R’s: To **revise**, the writer must **rethink**, **reshape**, and **re-write**, resulting in a final draft.

Revise and edit the paragraph by going over the paragraph, making changes and improving the organization and content, word choices and sentences, correcting spelling and punctuation, and then writing a final draft.

The diagram below will demonstrate these steps.



CHAPTER FOUR

Subject and Focus:

A paragraph, as you have learned, usually has one **topic sentence**. The topic sentence states the main idea, which tells the reader what the paragraph is about. The topic sentence is divided into two parts: a topic noun or short phrase, sometimes referred to as the subject, that names the general topic discussed in the paragraph. What was said about the subject is referred to as the **focus**.

In outlining a paragraph it is important to identify the topic sentence. The following paragraph has only two sentences. Which one is the topic sentence?

Reformers try to change institutions largely by means of words. Years ago people began to talk about the emancipation of “woman.”

Topic Sentence:

The first sentence is the topic sentence. Which word in the topic sentence is the topic noun or subject?

Topic Noun:

Which word is the focus?

Topic Focus:

The noun or subject is **Reformers** and the focus is *try to change institutions*.

single word or short phrase. Sentence outlines require a complete sentence for every topic and subtopic. Both types of outlines are like “blueprints:” they show the structure or pattern of a composition by showing how all of the topics and subtopics are connected to each other.

Write a topic outline of “The Commuter” by A.C. Sectorsky. Before actually writing the topic outline, follow the PRE-WRITING steps below.

- 1) Read the article to find **UNFAMILIAR WORDS**. Try not to filter words you don’t really know. Study the following list of words taken from “The Commuter.” Can you spell each word correctly, pronounce it in an accepted way, tell what Sectorsky means by it, and use it in a sentence of your own? If not, use the vocabulary learning techniques explained in appendix A. The line where each word is found is indicated in parentheses.

Psychic (6)	Borne (6)
Urban (3)	Incompetent (4)
Attrition (5)	Colleagues (3)
Sedimentary (5)	Symbols (6)
Schizoid (6)	Psychotic (6)
Postprandial (3)	

Now read the next paragraph. First find the topic sentence and underline the topic noun or subject and what is said about the subject or focus. Then, notice there are other sentences added to support the main idea statement expressed by the topic sentence. The supporting sentences present the sub-topics (specific statements) that explain in detail the general topic (main idea statement).

The commuter is distinguished from other mortals by (perhaps most notably) his remarkable vigor. Under physical and psychic strains, which might easily prove too much for the average urbanite or countryman, he not only survives but he thrives. The physical strains of his life start early each working day. On the average he rises an hour before his urban fellow workers, dresses and breakfasts more quickly, drives from half a mile to ten miles to a station, rides a train for at least half an hour – and only then copes with the city transportation which takes his non-commuting colleagues from home to office. In the evening the process is reversed, and he has barely climbed from his car at an hour when city people have already been happily relaxed for an hour or two. His dinner is usually correspondingly late, and either his postprandial leisure or his sleep is accordingly curtailed. In the winter, he may seldom see his home by daylight until the weekend. He enjoys certain advantages in the summer, but he continues to pay heavily for them.

(taken from The Exurbanites by A. C Sectorsky. Copyright © 1955, International Creative Management).

Topic
Sentence: _____

Subtopic
Noun: _____

Subtopic Noun:

Notice that the first sentence is the topic sentence. It names the general topic for discussion in this paragraph, which is vigor or the commuter's *vigor*. Two subtopic nouns are *physical strains* and *psychic strains*.

Finding the patterns of topics and subtopics in the writing of others will help you develop coherence in your own thinking and writing. The subject of the topic sentence here is "the commuter" and the focus is "is distinguished from others..."

FACTUAL AND SENSORY DETAILS

We have said that the combination of general and specific statements is an important characteristic of paragraphs. However, the effectiveness of the paragraph will depend, to a larger extent, on the types of specific details used to support the main idea. Some state facts and others impress the senses.

Factual Details give facts about the object being discussed. Factual details not only give readers explicit and exact information, they provide such details as dates, numbers, statistics and measurements, places and names.

Sensory Details focus on how something looks, sounds, feels, smells, or tastes.

Sensory details stimulate the imagination by appealing to the senses. This can be done by using descriptive words, those that have the most sense appeal, and by using comparisons. Some words have more sense appeal than other words. Words with sense appeal make you see, smell, hear, taste, and touch. A headache, for example, can be described as a "bad" headache or as a "pulsating, throbbing" headache.

Another way to stimulate the imagination is by using comparisons. Comparisons tell what something is like. For example, you can say that a traumatic experience is "horrible" or you can use a comparison to create a striking visual image by saying, "it left me staggering like a drunken man." The combination of factual and sensory details helps the reader to comprehend the main idea and gives the paragraph its rhetorical quality.

CHAPTER FIVE

Writing a Topic Outline

Writing an outline is an excellent way to study paragraph patterns and practice coherent thinking and writing. It helps to prevent **errors in logic**, which occur when the topic categories are confused in some way. For example, if you list motor vehicles under cars, you have listed a larger category under a smaller one. This says that a motor vehicle is a type of car when in actual fact a car is a type of motor vehicle. Look at a **formal outline**:

- I. **Introduction:** _____
 - A. Supporting Sentence 1
 - B. Supporting Sentence 2
 - C. Supporting Sentence 3
- II. **Body Paragraph 1**
 - A. Supporting Sentence 1
 - B. Supporting Sentence 2

Another error in logic is to list a topic under one that is equal to it. For instance, the topic category *cars* cannot be listed under *trucks* because a car is not a type of truck. Both of these errors are illustrated below: (insert figures to show the illustrations).

There are two types of outlines: **topic outlines** and **sentence outlines**. Topic outlines name the topics and subtopics with a

Commuter.” The first sentence is the topic sentence. Notice how each of the other sentences answers one or more of the six questions.

The physical strains of his life start early each working day.

(*When do they start?*) On the average he rises an hour before his urban fellow worker, (*What does he do then?*) dresses and breakfasts more quickly, drives (*How far?*) from half a mile to ten miles to a station, rides a train (*How long?*) for at least a half hour- and only then copes with the city transportation which takes his non-commuting colleagues (*Where?*) from home to office. (*What happens later?*) In the evening the process is reversed, and he has barely climbed his car at an hour when city people have already been happily relaxed for an hour or two. (*When is his dinner?*) His dinner is usually correspondingly late (*What is the result?*) and either is postprandial leisure or his sleep are accordingly curtailed. (*When do other strains occur and what are they?*) In the wintertime he may seldom see his home by daylight until the weekend. He enjoys certain advantages in the summer, but he continues to pay a heavily for them.

You never need to be at a loss for what to say after writing a topic sentence. Begin by asking the six questions and writing down the answers. You will soon have a paragraph.

CHECK LIST

- 1) Is the first sentence the topic sentence?
- 2) Do all other sentences relate to the topic sentence?
- 3) Is the structure of each sentence correct?
- 4) Is the paragraph organized in a logical pattern?
- 5) Is the punctuation of each sentence correct?
- 6) Are the words spelled correctly (using *SpellCheck* and a dictionary to check)?

frequently merely that they render him as physically exhausted as his labors have left him mentally exhausted.

6. The psychic strains are even greater, and it is a wonder that the commuter is not a raving psychotic. Certainly, the manner of his life is schizoid in the extreme, for the commuter is usually a symbol-manipulator who lives like a thing-manipulator. He is a deskman- goods and products are his concern only to the extent that he manipulates the symbols which stand for them. He is not only content to have it thus; he's proud and happy. Yet daily he steps from the train which has borne him home into his non-working life, and there he strives to live like a thing-manipulator.

(from The Exurbanites by A.C. Sectorsky. Copyright © 1955, International Creative Management).

“The Commuter” uses **chronological order** to group subtopics List below all the words or phrases from “The Commuter” that name periods of time.

Par #3 Early each working day

Evening _____

Par #4 _____

Par #5 _____

Par #6 _____

Did you list words and phrases like early each day, evening, wintertime, weekend, daily, and weekly sedentary life? After finding all topics and subtopics in the article, begin your topic outline. A topic outline never contains a complex sentence. Use

only a brief phrase or a single word to name the author's topics and subtopics. It is not always necessary to use a writer's exact word or phrase in your outline. You will often want to use a synonymous word or phrase of your own.

Also do not assume that every time a writer uses a new paragraph, you must enter something in your outline. Your job is to represent each of the writer's ideas in your outline, not necessarily each of his paragraphs. Sometimes, a writer will express the same idea in more than one paragraph, using different words each time. If you have stated an idea once in your outline, that is enough. It is not necessary to keep repeating the same idea.

Finally, remember that all outlines need not be worded exactly the same. Get the main idea and indent enough of the subtopics under general headings to give a complete "blueprint" of the original.

Using the following sheet, complete the outline of "The Commuter." Remember to indent topics and subtopics as needed.

ROUGH DRAFT

THE COMMUTER

I. The vigorous commuter

(A) Physical strains

1. Morning strains

II. Evening strains

to which the writer wishes to develop it. When all the subtopic ideas, that is the specific supporting statements, relate directly to the main idea, the result is a coherent paragraph.

A common problem, however, is thinking of ways to develop a main idea. Have you ever written a topic sentence and then been unable to think of anything more to say? This problem can be overcome by thinking of topic development as a question and answer process.

No main idea can be developed without answering one or more of six basic questions:



WHO?
WHAT?
WHEN?
WHERE?
WHY?
HOW?

Sometimes one of these questions is written down and answered in a paragraph. Usually, though, an experienced writer asks these questions to himself as he writes. A topic sentence is written, a question is asked in the writer's mind about the main idea, and the answer leads to another sentence that is added to the first. This process continues until a paragraph is produced.

To illustrate how the six basic questions can be used to expand a main idea into a paragraph, we will reread paragraph 1 of "The

Design D: Main idea as a last sentence

Subtopic
Subtopic
Subtopic

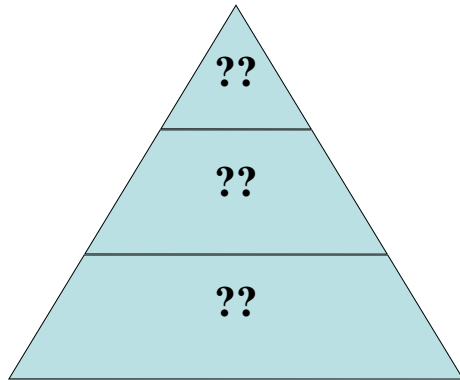
Topic Sentence

Design E: Main idea as a first and last sentence

Topic sentence

Subtopic
Subtopic

Topic Sentence



Use this triangle to create your Paragraph Design

CHAPTER SEVEN

Paragraph development

There is no standard length for a paragraph. The number of sentences in a paragraph depends on the main idea and the extent

III. Winter strains

IV. Summer advantages

V. Daily strains

VI. Weekend strains

(B) Psychic strains

PROOFREAD YOUR OUTLINE

Everything you write should be proofread several times. Use the following list to help evaluate your topic outline of “The Commuter.”

1. Have you used as few words as possible to name each topic and subtopic?
2. Have you written only one topic or subtopic per line?
3. Never ask questions in an outline. List topics.

4. Is wordiness a problem? Look again at each general topic. If general topics are well chosen, they permit a simple listing of subtopics beneath them.

5. Capitalize the first letter of the first word in every topic and subtopic.

6. Write on one side only when producing a final draft.

7. Use standard 8 1/2" X 11" sheets

8. Type the final draft.

9. Is the form correct?

10. Does the outline represent the writer's pattern of ideas fully and accurately?

11. Is there any illogical placement of subtopics under general topics?

CHAPTER SIX

Paragraph Format and Design

Format

In most writing situations, each paragraph should begin with an indented first line. The space between the margin and the first line is called an *indention*. In general, it is five spaces in from the margin.

Design

Most paragraphs contain a *topic sentence*. The topic sentence states the main idea that is developed by other sentences in the paragraph. The other sentences state subtopic ideas (specific statements or details) that support, explain or illustrate the topic sentence. Usually the topic sentence is placed at the beginning of the paragraph or as a first sentence.

The topic sentence (main idea statement) can also occur in various locations in a paragraph, as a second sentence, as a middle sentence, as a last sentence, and as a first and last sentence. At other times the topic sentence that expresses the main idea can be implied that is not explicitly or directly stated and in which case the reader has to figure it out by examining closely all the specific details of the paragraph.

Design A: Main idea as a first sentence:

Topic Sentence
Subtopic
Subtopic
Subtopic

Design B: Main idea as a second sentence

Subtopic
Topic Sentence
Subtopic

Design C: Main idea as a middle sentence

Subtopic
Subtopic
Topic Sentence
Subtopic
Subtopic

light blue cuffs and lapel facings. Her closed-cropped hair was the color and texture of straw, and she looked like a little boy. Her youthfulness was heightened by her blue button eyes, pink button nose, and red button mouth.

(Taken from The Day of the Locust by Nathanael West)

Analyze the model paragraph – The Day of the Locust and look for the following:

1. The author's point of view
2. The specific details which describe the scene
3. The senses that are appealed to
4. The comparisons that are made.

CHECK LIST FOR DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH

1. Does the title name the topic?
2. Does the first sentence name the topic and make a statement about it?
3. Do you mention specific details? Do they relate to the topic?
4. Have you made figurative comparisons?
5. Is the sentence structure correct?
6. Is the spelling correct?

Other Modes of Development

Comparison and Contrast

Comparison and Contrast is a mode of development that discusses two things in relation to each other. Comparison shows similarities between things. Contrast shows their differences. Comparison and Contrast discuss both similarities and differences.

REMEMBER THE FOUR R'S: To **R**evise, you must **R**ethink, **R**eshape, and **R**ewrite!

CHAPTER EIGHT

Types of Paragraphs and Modes of Development

Modes of development are traditional rhetorical strategies which good writers use in developing their paragraphs or essays. These modes reflect habits of mind that all writers use every day in thinking, speaking or writing. Good writers use a combination of modes to develop their composition and achieve their purpose of writing. We will consider the following rhetorical modes:

Narrative Paragraph

To write a narrative paragraph is to write a sequence of events that moves from a beginning to an end. The events may be real or fictional, or they may be steps in a process to be performed. The purpose of narration is to interest the reader in a story or event.

One technique to use in writing a narrative paragraph is to ask the questions: What, How, Where, When. For example, what specific incidents made up the event? How did it happen? When (time) did it happen? Where (place) did it take place? The answer to these questions will present to the reader a clear and lively account of the event

Order of arrangement

Every general statement needs one or more specific statements to expand it into a paragraph. The specific statements, in turn, must be organized according to a logical pattern if the paragraph is to be

clear and understandable. Three of the most frequently used patterns are chronological order, spatial order and order of importance.

Chronological order arranges incidents in the timely sequence they occurred in the narrative.

Spatial order is used frequently in paragraphs that describe people, places or objects.

Order of importance A writer may choose to begin with most important supporting detail, building the story to a high point or climax and ends with the least important or with the least important supporting detail to the most important.

Point of View

Narration forces the writer to choose a vantage point from which he will “view” the events narrated. Is he writing a personal experience as one who is in the middle of the action? Is he writing as a reporter standing off to one side as he narrates the events happening in front of him? Is he writing directly to you, the reader, as when instructing you on how to do something? These three points of views are called **first person**, **second person**, or **third person** depending of which kind of personal pronoun is used. If the writer is part of the action, the first person pronouns **I** and **we** are used. If the writer is off to one side of the action, the third person pronouns **he**, **she**, **it**, and **they** are used. If the writer is addressing his reader directly, the second person, **you**, is used.

POINTS OF VIEW

First person	Second person	Third person
I saw the accident.	You didn't see the accident.	He saw the accident.
We saw the		She saw the

2. List the specific details you want to use:

3. List the figurative comparatives you plan to use:

EXAMPLE: The ceiling stain looks like...
 The bedpost resembles a ...
 The carpet feels like...

4. Write the first sentence of your paragraph. The first sentence should be a topic sentence that names the topic (your room). Use third person point of view. That is, describe the room, not yourself.

6. Write a title that names the topic. Capitalize the first word as well as the other important words in the title.

Model Descriptive Paragraph

He stumbled to the center of the room and stopped. At first he was conscious only of the heavy odor of alcohol and stale tobacco, but then underneath he smelled a metallic perfume. His eyes moved in a slow circle. On the floor was a litter of clothing, newspapers, magazines, and bottles. Miss Martin was huddled up on a corner of the bed. She was wearing a man's black silk dressing gown with

5. Did you read each sentence to make sure the sentence structure is correct?

accident.		accident.
		They saw the accident.

Descriptive Paragraph

There are two ways to describe something. You can tell how the person, place or thing being described impresses your senses, or you can relate information about it. **Sensory description** focuses on how something looks, sounds, feels, smells, or tastes. Sensory description stimulates the imagination by appealing to the senses. This can be done by using descriptive words, those that have the most appeal, and by using comparisons.

Some words have more sense appeal than other words. Words with sense appeal make you see, smell, hear, taste, and touch. A headache, for example, can be described as “bad” headache or as a “pulsating, throbbing” headache. Which words have more sense appeal? Try to use words with the most sense appeal when writing description.

Another way to stimulate the imagination is by using comparisons. Comparisons tell what something is like. For example, you can say that a traumatic experience is “horrible,” or you can use a comparison to create a striking visual image by saying, “it left me staggering like a drunken man.” Sensory description calls for the use of comparisons along with descriptive words that have sense appeal.

Steps in writing a Descriptive Paragraph

Write a paragraph describing your room. Follow these steps:

1. Visit your room in your imagination. As you gaze around the room, what do you see? What do you smell? Can you hear anything? How does the room make you feel?

Figurative Language

If you write a friend and say, “I just got kicked out of the house,” what do you mean? If you were speaking literally, you mean that someone actually used a foot to propel your body out of the door. If, though, you are speaking figuratively, you mean simply that you were asked or commanded to leave without any physical contact being made. In this case the expression “kicked out” compares the actual manner of leaving with a physically violent one. Why use the expression “kicked out” in a figurative sense? Why say “kicked out” unless you really mean kicked out?

We all use figurative expression every day. The reason we do is that figurative language is more vivid, more striking, and more forceful than literal language. Figurative language is based on a comparison between two things.

There are different ways to compare things. In the sentence below, the writer describes the girl’s appearance by saying that “she looked like a little boy.” This is an obvious comparison between the girl’s appearance and a little boy’s appearance. The word like calls attention to the comparison. Figurative expressions that use words such as *like*, *similar to*, and *as* are called *similes*.

Other types of comparisons are not as obvious as similes. Notice how West describes the girl’s facial features as “blue button eyes, pink button nose, and red button mouth.

Here West compares the girl’s eyes, nose and mouth to buttons, but there is no word like *as* or *like* to call attention to the comparison. This type of figurative expression is called a *metaphor*. A comparison is made without calling attention to it.

A third kind of figurative language is called *personification*, which is done by speaking of a nonliving or nonhuman thing as if it had the characteristics of a living person. Thus the thing is personified. In the paragraph below, notice snow- flakes are personified as intelligent beings that can “ take counsel together,” “march,” and “help one another” to create basins and valleys.

Silently flying through the darkened air, swirling, glinting to their appointed places, they seem to have taken counsel together saying, ‘Come, we are feeble; let us help one another. We are many, and together we will be strong. Marching in close, deep ranks, let us roll away the stones from these mountain sepulchers, and set the landscapes free. Let us uncover those clustering domes. Here let us carve a lake basin, there, a Yosemite Valley; here, a channel for a river with fluted steps and brows for the plunge of a songful cataracts.

Steps for Writing a Narrative Paragraph

1. Use the first person point of view.
Select one of the following for your topic sentence and complete the sentence if necessary:
My first date was a disaster.
I will always remember my first day at school.
My room is always disorganized.
Our family vacation was very expensive
My trip to Disney world was interesting.
2. List the narrative events in the order of their occurrence.
Use chronological order, to ensure that the incidents are placed in logical sequence.

-
3. The paragraph should present a complete series of events with a beginning, middle, and end. Decide when and where you want the narrative to begin and end. Limit your paragraph to ten sentences or less.
 4. Write a title that names the topic. Capitalize the first letter of each important word in the title.

Model Narrative Paragraph

The model paragraph is taken from John Steinbeck’s “Tularecito” as published in The Pastures of Heaven in 1932:

Tularecito did not go to school when he was six. For five years thereafter, the county truant officer and the school superintendent sporadically worked on the case. Franklin Gomez agreed that he should go to school and even went so far as to start him off several times, but Tularecito never got there. He was afraid that school might prove unpleasant, so he simply disappeared for a day or so. It was not until the boy was eleven that the concerted forces of the law gathered him in and put him to school.

CHECK LIST for NARRATIVE PARAGRAPHS:

1. Did you proofread your paragraph to ensure correct spellings and punctuations?
2. Is the narrative written in the first person or accepted point of view?
3. Does the narrative have a beginning, middle, and end?
4. Does the title name the topic?

In comparing or contrasting, the supporting details can be organized using the *block* or *point-by point* method, sometimes referred to as the alternating method.

BLOCK METHOD

Classification and Division

Classification is a mode that separates things into categories or groups and then discusses each one. Food, for instance, can be classified into separate groups: carbohydrates, protein, fats and oil. Similarly, division analyses or breaks things into its distinct parts and discusses each part. For example, we can discuss the various parts of the human body.

Examples

Example or illustration is a mode that uses specific cases or examples to illustrate the main idea. Sometimes, but not always, the examples are introduced with phrases like for example and for instance. A writer may choose to use several short examples or an extended illustration to support a topic sentence.
(may include model paragraph)

PROCESS

A process mode is used when a writer wants to tell a reader how to do something. A process can be anything from baking a cake to packing a parachute – that involves a series of steps which must be followed in a certain order as to achieve the desired result. Since process is a “how to” paragraph, second person point of view is appropriate. The writer is directly addressing the reader. The body of the paragraph will discuss the steps in the process.

Read again the model paragraph, *Writing a Process Paragraph*, on page 25.

DEFINITION

A definition mode answers the topic question: What is it? Definitions define terms. A term is one or more words that identify a concept. Concepts may be intangible (abstract) ideas like love and freedom, or they may be tangible (concrete) ideas like mechanic and dictionary. A definition always does two things: [italicize love, freedom, mechanic and dictionary]
First, it tells what a term IS. You can do this by placing the term into a larger category or class to which it logically belongs For example a mechanic is a worker (italicize worker)
Second, it tells what a term IS NOT. You can also do this by adding a defining phrase to the definition. The defining phrase distinguishes a mechanic from all other workers like a plumber or a painter For example, a mechanic is a worker skilled in repairing machines.
When you define a term, you are only giving a definition that you prefer and intend to use. Others may prefer different definitions of the term. That is not important. What is important is that the reader understands your use of the term. Thus he will not confuse your concept with his of the two ideas are different.(may include a model paragraph)

ARGUMENTATION AND PERSUASION

Argumentation is a mode of exposition in which three things are assumed:

1. There is a disagreement
2. The writer thinks he is right
3. The writer wants to convince or persuade the reader to agree with him/her.

Without disagreement there is no argument. There are two basic types of disagreements that people argue about, whether or not something is true or whether or not a present situation ought to be

Transitional expressions connect all the steps in the writing process. They inform the reader that the narrative is moving from one step to the next. It is like a solid bridge or passage that moves a reader from one sentence or idea to another. It helps the reader to follow the writer's progression of ideas and, it gives unity to the paragraph. A single word or phrase is usually sufficient to connect the steps in a one- paragraph narrative. Some commonly used transitional devices are:

First, (second, third, etc)

Next...

On the other hand...

However...

Then...

After that...

At first...

Finally...

The next step is...

Read the following process paragraph written in the second person. The transitional devices are italicized:

Writing a Process Paragraph

If you want to write a process paragraph, follow these steps. First, make a list of all the steps in the process. Be sure that you list the steps in the same order that they actually occur in the process. The next thing to write is a topic sentence that clearly names the process. Then develop the topic sentence by following it with one or two sentence description of each step in the process. Finally, write a concluding sentence that lets the reader know that the process has been completed. (italicize the transitional words)

GLITTERING GENERALITIES

The glittering generalities fallacy is the opposite of name calling. Instead of bad names, glittering generalities are words that glitter, words like freedom and patriotism. Merely claiming, however, that one's cause or program is on the side of "God", "moral values", or the "American way" does not prove that it really is, nor does it prove that one's ideas are true.

NON SEQUITOR

A conclusion that does not follow from the evidence presented is a non sequitor. To conclude for example, that scarecrows frighten away dinosaurs because no dinosaur has ever been found in a field guarded by a scarecrow is a non sequitor. The conclusion (i.e. scarecrows frighten away dinosaurs) does not follow from the evidence presented. There may be other reasons why the dinosaurs are missing.

BANDWAGON

Telling a reader to believe in something because "everyone believes it," is an emotional appeal to the reader's natural desire to be accepted and well thought of. Bandwagon appeals, however, do not prove that "everyone" does really believe it, nor do they prove that the majority is right. There was a time when majority of intelligent people and the learned circle believed that the earth was flat; they were all wrong.

CIRCULAR ARGUMENT

When an idea is restated in different words, it is said to be circular argument. The lecture hall is crowded because so many students are inside.

TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSIONS

continued or changed. Argumentative essays seek to answer one or both what questions: what is true and /or what ought to be continued or changed?

If the essay answers only the first question – What is true? – it will attempt to show that a certain idea or thesis is a fact. Having done this, it will stop there. If however, the writer wants to go on and answer the second question also – what should be done? – he will use the facts already presented as a basis to urge the reader to do something or to be in favor of something.

An argument is like a competitive game in which the writer's thesis is competing against one or more opposing ideas. As in every contest, there are certain rules that all contestants agree to follow and certain objective standards of measurement by which all contestants agree to be judged. In the "game" of argumentation, the rules are rules of reason, and the final judgment is based on the evidence for or against an idea. The more a thesis can be defended by logical reasoning and the more it can be supported by the facts, the stronger it is.

An Arguable Thesis

The thesis of an argument states what you are going to prove. This means that your thesis statement is provable. It cannot, therefore, be a simple statement of some personal preference. If I say that roast beef tastes better than liver, that's an un-provable statement. It requires no proof. You may like liver better than roast beef, and we have a disagreement. However it is not a disagreement that can be resolved by reasoning or evidence. There is no issue in either statement that goes beyond personal taste.

On the other hand, if I say that red meat consumption can cause heart disease, I have stated a thesis that is arguable. Regardless of my personal opinion on the matter, red meat consumption is or is not a threat to my health. What is the truth of the matter? The only way to find out is to reason on the evidence from animal studies, dietary surveys, statistical analysis, etc. An arguable thesis is one

that can be resolved, not by personal opinion, but by a reasonable interpretation of the facts.

Recognizing an Arguable Thesis

Practice recognizing an arguable thesis by looking at the following list of statements and doing two things with each one:

1. Decide if it is arguable or not.
2. If it is arguable, circle any items in the thesis that you think are vague and will need to be defined.

ARGUABLE

NOT ARGUABLE

1. Men are superior to women.

2. Women look terrible in pants.

3. Abraham Lincoln was the best president.

4. Every good Christian will fight for the US.

5. U.S. should not have bombed Japan.

6. Food additives can cause cancer.

7. Grasshoppers are not fit to eat.

8. God is on our side.

9. Blondes are prettier than Brunettes.

10. My country, right or wrong.

Look over your answers. Can you defend them?

LOGICAL FALLACIES

It is also true that in argumentation, some arguers break the rules of reason and try to persuade others by resorting to false reasoning or emotional appeals. In a courtroom the judge sits as a referee to ensure that both sides play by the rules. When the rules are broken, the judge may instruct the jury to disregard certain statements because they are irrelevant or misleading. Likewise, when you defend your thesis, be careful to avoid logical fallacies. There is never a substitute for an honest presentation of the facts along with sound reasoning. If it is found that you have distorted the truth, or used false reasoning, your credibility is immediately destroyed. You lose the argument by default.

Below are a few of the common logical fallacies found in invalid arguments.

NAME CALLING

Calling an opponent bad names diverts attention from the issue. Name calling attempts to manipulate the reader by appealing to his prejudices. For example calling someone a “heretic,” “traitor”, or a “racist bigot” does not prove that he is one, nor does it prove that his ideas are wrong. Labeling someone with bad names is simply an attack on a person (argument *ad hominem*), rather than an examination of the evidence which may or may not support his argument.