
Paragraphs groups of related sentences that present and develop one idea or one aspect of an idea

Roloff & Brosseit

PARAGRAPHS

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GLENCOE PUBLISHING CO., INC.

Encino, California

Collier Macmillan Publishers
LONDON

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Printed in the United States of America

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Glencoe Publishing Co., Inc.
17337 Ventura Boulevard
Encino, California 91316
Collier Macmillan Canada, Ltd.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 77-094775

3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 83 82 81 80 79

ISBN: 0-02-477410-3

PREFACE

This text-workbook is designed for courses that deal with the paragraph as the basic unit of effective writing. It includes thorough instruction and many practice exercises to help students recognize the qualities of effective paragraphs, order paragraphs logically, master the four rhetorical modes and the nine methods of expository development, combine types of order and development, and apply the principles of effective paragraph writing to the writing of longer compositions.

Paragraphs is structured to lead students through the steps involved in writing effective paragraphs: choosing and narrowing the subject; constructing the topic sentence; dealing with the qualities of effective paragraphs, with order in the paragraph, and with methods of development; and finally, writing the whole composition. In addition to thorough coverage of concepts and frequent application and practice exercises, specific features of this text include a Pretest for diagnostic purposes, a parallel Post-test to measure student progress, an Additional Practice section comprised of concept summaries and further exercises, and an Answer Key. The Answer Key appears at the end of the book, so that students can check their own work on the exercises that do not involve composition. However, if the instructor does not want students to have these answers, the perforation of the book permits their easy removal.

We are grateful to Marie Enders, our acquisitions editor, for some excellent suggestions about the organization and content of this text, and to Catherine Fuller, our development editor, for her enthusiasm and careful attention to detail. We would also like to thank Professors Elsie Deal, Edinboro State College, and Roslyn Snow, Orange Coast College, for their many fine suggestions during the preparation of this text.

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PRETEST



The following pretest will help you find out what you already know about paragraphs and what you still need to learn and practice. Each section has separate directions.

A. MODES OF WRITING: There are four basic modes of writing. In the blank before each paragraph, put an *E* if the paragraph is an example of *exposition*; an *A* if the paragraph is an example of *argument*; a *D* if the paragraph is an example of *description*; or an *N* if the paragraph is an example of *narration*.

- 1. It was springtime, and by daylight I could see the blue combers rolling in, screened occasionally as I drove past clumps of rhododendron with outrageously beautiful bursts of pink and purple blossoms. By moonlight the waves moved in majesty out of the mottled sea, flaunting long pale crests as they broke onto the sand. Sometimes I saw the faint lights of coastwise ships, and from time to time we rumbled over wooden bridges where wild rivers like the Rogue came roaring out of the mountains.

—Adapted from Richard L. Williams, *The Northwest Coast*

- 2. There is probably no element of society that has been engineered or tinkered with more often in the seventy-eight years of its existence than the juvenile justice system. Accepted methods for reforming “wayward” juveniles have at different times included approaches as diverse as physical punishment, isolation, individual psychotherapy, and mountain survival schools. Programs have been instituted in many different settings, from detention in locked facilities to living situations within the community (including foster homes and group homes of various sorts). The latest approach (or fad, depending on your point of view) to reforming juvenile offenders is called “Juvenile Diversion.” In theory, this approach attempts to identify mild or potential offenders before their entry into the formal justice system and to “divert” them into a community treatment program that is far cheaper and perhaps more effective than a youth training school or probation camp.

—Michael M. McAleenan, “Taking a Closer Look at Juvenile Diversion,” *Occidental College Magazine*. May 1978

- 3. The baying of the hounds drew nearer, then still nearer, nearer, ever nearer. On a ridge Rainsford climbed a tree. Down a watercourse, not a quarter of a mile away, he could see the bush moving. Straining his eyes, he saw the lean figure of General Zaroff; just ahead of him Rainsford made out another figure whose wide shoulders surged through the tall jungle weeds; it was the giant Ivan, and he seemed pulled forward by some unseen force; Rainsford knew that Ivan must be holding the pack in leash. They would be on him any minute now. His mind worked frantically. He thought of a native trick he had learned in Uganda. He slid down the tree. He caught hold of a springy young sapling and to it he fastened his hunting knife, with the blade pointing down the trail; with a bit of wild grapevine he tied back the sapling. Then he ran for his life. The hounds raised their voices as they hit the fresh scent. Rainsford knew now how an animal at bay feels.

—Richard Connell, “The Most Dangerous Game”

- _____ 4. There is currently an intense debate being waged over the nature of the heating system employed by a group of creatures extinct now for 70 million years. This debate has to do with dinosaurs. Recently it was suggested, rather revolutionarily, that these reptiles were, unlike others, warm-blooded rather than cold-blooded. Only warm-blooded animals walk erect with their legs vertical and that's what dinosaurs did, it is said, their anatomy and footprints being evidence; cold-blooded things like lizards have a sprawling stance with a good part of their legs horizontal. Warm-bloodedness requires high blood pressure; so does a creature with its head carried above its heart. (Brachiosaurus' neck was eighteen feet long, calling for enough blood pressure on sheer hydraulic grounds to permit the notion of warm-bloodedness.) Dinosaurs have vascularized bones like mammals and birds. Dinosaur tracks have been found as far north as Spitsbergen in the Arctic and you need to be warm-blooded to live up there.

—James K. Page, Jr., "Phenomena, Comment and Notes,"
Smithsonian, June 1978

- _____ 5. I had the island to myself on its western reaches. The mainland, far behind, was lost in haze. As I climbed over the shoulder near the sheer west end, the wind came fresh in my face, and with it the shrill cries of the sea birds. On the way back, I suddenly encountered a small flock of wild sheep. A fierce-looking ram stared at me, and then, to my relief, led his flock plunging down the steep side of the island to shelter under a rocky ledge far below. Their wool had never been shorn; it hung to the ground.

—Robert S. Ryf, "Faces out of Stone," *Occidental College Magazine*, May 1978

B. LEVELS OF GENERALITY: It is important that the subject of a paragraph be narrow and specific, since a paragraph is a relatively short unit of writing. In each of the following groups of statements, number the statements in order from most general (1) to most specific (3). Only the statement you number 3 is narrow and specific enough to be the subject of a paragraph.

1. _____ a. The process called holography is three-dimensional, lensless photography.
- _____ b. Holography is an unusual kind of photographic process.
- _____ c. Through the use of laser beams, holography records three-dimensional images on a plate coated with photographic emulsion.
2. _____ a. Almost any glass bottle can be used as a terrarium to house such plants as ferns, cactus, or orchids.
- _____ b. A terrarium is actually a hothouse on a miniature scale.
- _____ c. Many indoor gardeners enjoy terrariums.

3. _____ a. Special problems are connected with superskyscrapers.
_____ b. One problem with skyscrapers is fire.
_____ c. *Fire is the most serious hazard in a skyscraper; the heat upsets the mechanism of automatic elevators, making it impossible for some people to escape.*
4. _____ a. Timber is an important resource in the United States.
_____ b. Timber is our only renewable resource; but without careful planning, demand could easily exceed supply.
_____ c. Timber has many uses: in building, in paper production, and in many other ways.
5. _____ a. Not only is radioactivity very old, but it is present in everything known to man.
_____ b. Radioactivity is very old.
_____ c. While the discovery of radioactivity is comparatively new, experiments prove that it has been present on earth for a very long time.

C. THE TOPIC SENTENCE: The topic sentence of a paragraph must be limited and specific, and it must have something clear and definite to say. Some of the following sentences are unacceptable as topic sentences because they are too vague and general. Write *U* in the space before the sentence if it is unacceptable as the topic sentence of a paragraph; write *A* in the space before the sentence if it is an acceptable topic sentence.

- _____ 1. Psychology is an interesting subject.
- _____ 2. Psychology has become so popular that it has, in many ways, almost taken the place of religion in twentieth-century America.
- _____ 3. There are lessons to be learned from watching television.
- _____ 4. Health-care costs are rising.
- _____ 5. Through watching television, we can learn much about parts of the world that formerly were only hazy names in our minds.
- _____ 6. Life insurance is a necessity.

- _____ 7. Inflation has caused health-care costs to become so high that only through having a good health-insurance policy can middle-class people get adequate medical attention.
- _____ 8. Since the death or disability of the woman in the family can cause severe economic hardship, both the husband and wife in a family should have adequate life-insurance coverage.
- _____ 9. Aerobic exercise benefits the body by stimulating heart and lung activity.
- _____ 10. Exercise is good for people.

D. UNITY: A paragraph must have *unity*—that is, it must be limited to one central idea, and every sentence in the paragraph must relate directly to that idea. The central idea for a proposed paragraph is *why many Americans have nothing to do with organized religion*. Some of the ideas listed below would contribute to unity in such a paragraph; others would not. Put an X in the space before each idea that would contribute to the unity of the paragraph.

- _____ 1. Many Americans feel scorn for the hypocrisy and self-righteousness of certain churchgoers.
- _____ 2. Trying to be like others makes many people hide their true feelings.
- _____ 3. Churches often have impossibly strict personal or doctrinal demands.
- _____ 4. Church politics turn off some people.
- _____ 5. Some churchgoers show prejudices against dress, hair length, race, or behavior.
- _____ 6. Many people have a hidden longing for faith.

E. COHERENCE: A paragraph must have *coherence*—that is, the sentences in a paragraph must be arranged so that the relationship among them is clear and logical and so that the ideas flow smoothly from one sentence to the next. There are three common devices for achieving coherence: *the use of transitional expressions, the repetition of key terms, and pronoun reference*. In the following paragraph the lines have been numbered. In the blank space before each number, write one of the

letters below for each of the transitional devices which is italicized in that line, to indicate which kind of transitional device has been used.

- a. transitional expression
- b. key term
- c. pronoun reference

- _____ 1. One group of real Eskimos, the Inuit, still live in the old
- _____ 2. traditional way and employ the ancient skills. *Although*
- _____ 3. modern technology has made some changes in the way the *Inuit*
- _____ 4. carry on their work, *they* have not forgotten the ways of
- _____ 5. their ancestors. *During* the summer *they* spend most of their
- _____ 6. time outdoors. The *Inuit* women cook outside, *their* children
- _____ 7. play in the chilly streams, and the men lie on the ground
- _____ 8. and talk *after* hunting for caribou or fishing. The *men*
- _____ 9. can build snow houses, and the *women* use their curved knives
- _____ 10. for all kinds of chores; the *children* seem to learn effort-
- _____ 11. lessly from watching *their* parents. These true Eskimos,
- _____ 12. the *Inuit*, have refused to let the outside world destroy
- _____ 13. *their* way of life.

F. LEVELS OF SUPPORT: The kinds of support we use in a paragraph can be classified according to how specific and detailed they are. *Primary supports* relate directly back to the topic sentence; *secondary supports* relate directly back to the primary supports and give more detailed information; *tertiary supports* (meaning third level) relate back to the secondary supports and are even more detailed and specific than the secondary supports. Each sentence in the following paragraph is numbered, and numbered blanks are at the end of the paragraph. In those blanks, label each sentence in the paragraph as *topic sentence*, *primary support*, *secondary support*, *tertiary support*, or *concluding sentence*.

(1) The social and philosophical implications of contact with another civilization on another planet in another galaxy require the most careful consideration. (2) It is possible that our image of ourselves could change drastically as a result of such contact with extraterrestrial life. (3) We might find that we are really more advanced and more civilized than we now think we are. (4) On the other hand, we might find that we are far less advanced and far less civilized than other social organizations of intelligent beings, which would certainly be a blow to the self-image of human beings. (5) As a result, we might come to depend too heavily upon a superior form of intelligence, thus destroying our own initiative. (6) Man's idea of God would undoubtedly undergo a change if we were to discover other intelligent beings in the universe. (7) At the very least, our concept of God's domain would expand. (8) But we might develop such different ideas about religion that the basic beliefs we have held for centuries would face a severe challenge. (9) So, although it is hard to ascertain just what the consequences of interstellar communication with other intelligent beings would be, it is clear that such communication would have profound reverberations among the inhabitants of Earth.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

G. ORDER IN THE PARAGRAPH: There are five common ways of arranging the information in your paragraphs clearly and logically: by *time*, by *space*, by order of importance moving to a *climax*, by moving from *general to specific*, and by moving from *specific to general*. Indicate which type of order is used in each of the following paragraphs, by putting one of the letters below in the blank before each paragraph.

- | | |
|-----------|------------------------|
| a. time | d. general to specific |
| b. space | e. specific to general |
| c. climax | |

- 1. It was one of those mysterious fairy calls from out of the void that suddenly reached Mole in the darkness, making him tingle through and through with its very familiar appeal, even while as yet he could not clearly remember what it was. He stopped dead in his tracks, his nose searching hither and thither in its efforts to recapture the fine filament, the telegraphic current, that had so strongly moved him. A moment, and he had caught it again; and with it this time came recollection in its fullest flood. Home! Why, it must be quite close by him at that moment—and now it was sending out its scouts and its messengers to capture him and bring him in. The call was clear, the summons was plain. He must obey it instantly, and go.

—Adapted from Kenneth Grahame, *The Wind in the Willows*

- 2. Dr. Paul Woudenbergh, minister of the Church of the Wayfarer in Carmel, California, is an avid collector of antique cars who first became interested in his hobby when he was a sophomore in college. “There was an economics professor who drove an old Lincoln touring car and parked it by the Student Union,” he says. “I thought this was a pretty good thing to do, so I started driving a 1908 Buick.” During his years in college, Dr. Woudenbergh owned ten antique cars. After completing his Ph.D. in the east and returning to California as minister of a church in Echo Park, he started a car club. His enthusiasm for the hobby has remained steady throughout the years, and he estimates that he has owned a total of 150 cars.

—Adapted from Sita Chaney, “Classic Car Collector: Paul Woudenbergh,” *Occidental College Magazine*, May 1978

- 3. Stay up late for Puerto Rico’s Las Vegas—tempo nightlife. Learn the Limbo in Trinidad. Climb up a 600-foot waterfall in Jamaica. Bargain shop on sun-splashed Curacao. Dive down to the shipwrecks and coral fantasies off Barbados. There’s a lot to do as an islander when you come to the Caribbean.

—“The Caribbean,” adapted from an advertisement by Hilton International and Western Airlines

- 4. The magnificent Pacific seascape is the western boundary of the northwest coast, a line where water and sky merge in an unbroken horizon formed by the curvature of the earth. The other limits of the northwest coast depend on who does the defining. I have chosen as the northern limit the Nitinat Triangle, a fascinating wilderness area across the border in Canada on Vancouver Island; as the southern limit the Kalmiopsis Wilderness, an equally fascinating area that is enclosed by the Siskiyou National Forest in southwestern Oregon within sight of the California state line. Both the Nitinat and the Kalmiopsis are parts of the Coast Ranges, the mountain ramparts that rise right out of the sea all along western America, and both extend inland only a few miles. They are linked by about 500 miles of magnificent coastline, a dynamic meeting of earth and ocean that is the region’s recurring theme.

—Adapted from Richard L. Williams, *The Northwest Coast*

- 5. The job of controlling air and water pollution in the steel industry is a tough one. And the costs are high. So far, Bethlehem Steel has spent about \$550 million for hardware to clean up pollutants from the air and water we use. In addition, it costs us about \$75 million a year to operate and maintain these control facilities, including the cost of valuable energy. We're proud of what we have done. Today we have in place or in progress facilities and plans designed to effectively control the major sources of pollution at our operations.

—Adapted from an advertisement by Bethlehem Steel Corporation

H. PATTERNS OF EXPOSITION: Exposition, which is writing that informs or explains, is the most frequent mode of writing you will use in school or on the job. There are nine basic patterns of development by exposition which you are likely to use in your writing. Indicate which pattern of development is used in each of the following paragraphs, by putting one of the letters below in the blank before each paragraph.

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| a. facts | f. illustration |
| b. process | g. cause-effect |
| c. classification | h. definition |
| d. comparison-contrast | i. analogy |
| e. analysis | |

- 1. Rusting is a year-round problem for your car, and corrosive conditions have become a lot worse in the last five years. However, there are things you can do about reducing rust on your car. First, it's important to wash your car often, using a mild soap and lukewarm or cold water. Please don't neglect the underside of your car. The worst rusting happens from the inside out. That's because salt, slush, and even mud tend to collect in the crevices underneath the car, in the door creases, and inside the fenders. Moisture gets trapped in those places and causes rust. So try to wash the underside of your car, too—in winter, if you can, and at the first opportunity in spring. Second, if your car gets dented, scratched, or chipped, try to get it repaired as soon as possible. Even a small scratch is bad, because once a car starts to rust, the damage spreads fast. The paint around a dent or scratch can look okay, but rust is spreading underneath. In the long run, it's cheaper to fix the car right away. Third, don't park your car in a heated garage. A lot of people think that parking a car in a heated garage during the winter will help prevent rust. But it's just the opposite. Cold slows down the rusting process, as it does most chemical reactions. You want to protect your car so that it lasts longer and gives you the most value. Fighting rust helps.

—Adapted from "How to Reduce Rust," an advertisement by General Motors