

Types of Orders

Time Order: is sometimes referred to as chronological order. When using time order, writers arrange the paragraph's supporting details in the order which they happened or in a step by step arrangement. Time order is commonly used in narrative paragraphs that relate a series of events or in paragraphs that include step-by-step directions. Once a time order has been established, it is important that the writer make sure that no important events or steps are omitted or out of place. Otherwise, the reader is likely to be confused.

Spatial Order: another way to arrange a paragraph's supporting details is spatial order. Paragraphs that relate an observation or a description are often arranged using spatial order. When using spatial order, writers organize the supporting details in a spatial pattern. For example, a writer describing a photograph may begin on the left-hand side of the photo and end on the right-hand side. As long as the writer proceeds in a clear direction, the reader should be able to follow the writer's description.

Order of Importance: this method is commonly used in formal writing (as opposed to paragraphs that tell stories or relate a description). Using this organizational pattern, you arrange your supporting details from least important to most important. These ideas can be examples; reasons, or facts that support your topic sentence. Placing the most important idea last emphasizes its importance. Your reader is more likely to remember the last supporting detail of your paragraph than the first.



Some Strategies for Improving Your Own Writing

Ways To Make Your Writing Clear

CLARITY, ACADEMIC STYLE & COHERENCE



Nowadays, almost all the most updated writing textbooks discuss the *writing process* (you may read about the writing process theories in the hand-outs for SHEET ONE). A great deal of writing-techniques based on the *writing process* theories are therefore introduced to teachers and students of languages (especially to those who deal with English study) all over the world.

To help you approach these new techniques which obviously help you a lot in improving your writing skills, I think it's necessary to introduce you some features that I collected, summarized from a few chapters and parts of some updated textbooks (published in 2000, 2001), and from the Internet.

The features you are going to read about in this document include: *Ways of achieving clarity*, *Ways of Achieving Academic Style*, *Ways of Achieving Smooth Flow of Ideas* (sometimes called *Coherence*), and *Steps to Writing and Revising*.

Achieving Clear Writing

In academic and professional writing, the reader should not have to guess at meaning. However, in an unclear sentence, the reader must try to guess what the writer is saying-in the absence of the writer. This error is particularly serious as it interferes with the reader's ability to understand the content of a piece of writing. In other words, the meaning of the text is at least partially lost.

The following extract was written by a student of AV22, at Dalat University

English is spoken all the world such as: Hong Kong, Singapore....Secondly, in national relationship, it occupied special position that helps the leader discuss with each other and we need to know about the cultures, customs of countries to improve friendship among countries. Moreover, English is more familiar to our life, for example, when you go to wherever you meet some instructors if you don't understand, you will not know what to do. Lastly, it is mankind's language that future generation should study it.

Suggestions for mastering sentence clarity:

Often, writers who can write easily and correctly about their personal experiences find themselves writing unclear sentences when, in academic or professional writing, they begin writing on more abstract topics. A good strategy for becoming familiar with the language you will need to use and with the kinds of writing you will have to do in either academic or professional writing is the read examples of this kind of writing in textbooks, journals, newspapers, or magazines.

Remember that you, as a writer, have the responsibility for conveying your ideas clearly to the reader. The following are five strategies that will help you write clear sentences:

- 1-Avoid translating from your native language. Try to think and write in English as much as possible.
- 2-Tell a classmate or your teacher an idea you are trying to express in writing. (*You now understand why I usually ask you to work in groups and to give me your drafts before handing in your final copy*). Then write it the way you said it. Do not worry that your English is "too simple". Being clear is more important than sounding sophisticated.
- 3-Use words that you know rather than "big words" whose meanings you are unsure of. You can then refine your language in later drafts of a paper. You will also find that as you gain more confidence in your writing skills, you will improve your command of vocabulary. (*Try to avoid asking yourself or your teacher the question: "What does this word mean in English?", you should try to think how you can say to make your reader understand the word, instead. For example, you can obviously say "a person who works in a ship" if you don't know the word "sailor".*)
- 4-Take a sentence that has been marked unclear on your paper and try to rewrite it yourself. Rethink the idea you want to express, determine what you really want to say, and then restate the sentence.

5-Do not be afraid to write some short, simple sentences to clarify your meaning to yourself when you are writing a draft and are in the process of formulating your ideas. Then, in later drafts, you can combine some of these ideas into more complex sentences.

Action! (Work in your group)

This paragraph, which was written by a student, has been edited so that the only errors in grammar are unclear sentences. Read the paragraph out loud to each other and listen for unclear sentences. Put any unclear sentences or parts of sentences you hear between brackets. Then read the paragraph silently to make them clear. Be prepared to discuss how easy or difficult it is to revise the unclear sentences of another writer.

There are many differences between third-world and industrialized nations. One important differences is in the types of worries individuals have in their daily lives. All humans have worries, but one hard tension for some people may differ hardness other people. In many parts of the world, people never think about buying new clothes or the latest model TV set or car. All that they think about is how they can get a food from hunger. People have a great terror and this thing has a lot of tension. In contrast, people who live in wealthy nations usually never think about food except where or when they are going to eat, but they have different problems in their lives, such as too much work, family problems, and stress. In both types of countries, rich or poor, people are never free from worry.

Achieving Academic Writing Style

Academic writing in English is clear and concise. It is also direct, meaning that the writer gets to the main point as quickly as possible. Academic writing in English is sometimes referred to as “linear” in development, meaning that the writers makes a point and immediately supports that point with evidence and then moves on to the next point. This linear development in English is in contrast to writing styles in other languages in which the writer might, for example, go around the point but never address it directly or digress to another point before finishing the first point. Academic writing is also formal in its use of vocabulary and correct sentence structure, whereas spoken English is often more informal in these areas.

Again, keep in your mind that one of the best ways to become familiar with academic and professional writing style is to read authentic samples of it and to use them as models for your own writing. These samples, such as articles and reports, will help you not only see the formal word choice and sentence structure mentioned above but also will help you become familiar with standard formats and common language used in many types of academic and professional writing, such as term paper, lab reports, journal articles, business letters, memos, grant proposals, and progress reports.

Below are several specific suggestions that, when incorporated into your writing, will help you achieve academic writing style.

Suggestions for achieving academic writing style.

1-Avoid informal or colloquial language:

Original: I need to spend some time sorting the junk in my office.

Revised: I need to spend some time sorting the material in my office.

Action! Try to revise the following sentence. The informal word is underlined.

Original: Analyzing the data has been rough.

Revised:

2-Use single-word verbs as much as possible rather than phrasal verbs(two-and three-word verbs), as single-word verbs are generally more formal and concise.

Original: First, heat the solution to the boiling point. Keep on boiling it for at least two minutes

Revised: First, heat the solution to the boiling point. Continue boiling it for at least two minutes



Action! Try to revise the following sentence. The informal word is underlined.

Original: The medicine will not get rid of the problem, but it will lesson the symptom.

Revised:

.....

Original: Because of the above characteristics, my uncle is always loved and looked up to by everyone. (by T.C.T-AV20G-Dalat University)

Revised:

.....

3-Avoid contractions.

Original: Applicants who don't have strong computer skills won't be as competitive as those who do.

Revised: Applicants who do not have strong computer skills will nor be as competitive as those who do.

Action! Try to revise the following sentence. The informal word is underlined.

Original: First, you heat the solution. Then you let it boil for five minutes.

Revised:

.....

4-Avoid addressing the reader directly as "you"

Original: If you receive less than 550 on the TOEFL examination, you may not be able to enter some U.S. universities.

Revised: Applicants who receive less than 550 on the TOEFL examination may not be able to enter some U.S. universities

5-Avoid asking the reader direct questions.

Original: What are the reasons for homelessness?

Revised: The reasons for homelessness include.....

Action! Try to revise the following sentence.

Original: Do you know? Many students in Dalat University have to.....(by H.N.T.Q-AV21)

Revised:

.....

Original: How were the data collected? It is a very difficult question to answer.

Revised:

.....

6-As much as possible, place adverbs mid-position in a sentence (before the main verb or in a verb phrase after the auxiliary verb) rather than initially or finally.

Original: I feel I will be able to expand my vocabulary eventually.

Revised: I feel I will eventually be able to expand my vocabulary.

Action! Try to revise the following sentence. The informal word is underlined.

Original: Mark uses the computer room regularly.

Revised:

.....

7-Avoid the use of etc., and so on, and and so forth because these terms are vague.

Original: Whenever I have free time, I enjoy sports, etc. (by N.P.T-AV20)

Revised: Whenever I have free time, I enjoy sports and other activities such as listening to music or watching T.V.

Action! Try to revise the following sentence. The informal word is underlined.

Original: At the meeting, the new project, the old project, the new pay scale, etc. were

discussed.

Revised:

8-Use passive voice when appropriate.

Note that the passive voice is common in some types of academic writing, especially when the writer is describing methods and procedures. (*For more information on passive voice, you may contact me to get a photocopy of the chapter about using passive voice.*)

9-Use words that indicate the strength of your claims.

Examples: *The data clearly show that...* is much better than *The data indicate that ...* or *The data suggests that...*
A dramatic difference and *A significant difference* are a lot more effective than *A difference*

(*I will collect the information about the choice of words and give you all in the next hand-outs*)

10-Use formal negative forms

Original: Many programs do not admit any new students in spring semester.

Revised: Many programs admit no new students in spring semester.

Original: Not very much research has been done in this area.

Revised: Little research has been done in this area.

Action! (Work in your group)

Task 1:

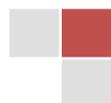
Practice some of the features of academic style discussed in this section by revising each of the following sentences to make its style more academic. The features that you should revise are underlined for you in each sentence.

- 1-When you are applying for a job, you may want to use the services of the Career Placement Centre on your campus.
- 2-There has not been any snow this year.
- 3-Although they've lived here for 10 years, my parents haven't had a chance to learn English.
- 4-Usually, I communicate with my parents in our native language, Chinese.
- 5-I have a number of things I need to accomplish today: errands, etc.
- 6-Why is this procedure helpful? First, it is simple and inexpensive to perform.

Task 2:

Using not only formal but also precise vocabulary is one of the most important aspects of academic writing style. Practice this important feature by choosing a more formal or precise word for each of the underlined words or phrases taken from student writing.

- 1-The job description talks about the requirements for potential candidates.
- 2-In my research, I will look at the effects of pesticides on soil.
- 3-Now I am finishing my senior year as a chemistry major at the University of Arizona.
- 4-I am thinking about applying for the position available at your company.
- 5-I am writing to inquire about some more details on the research I will be expected to do.
- 6-I am really interested in a flight attendant job with your company.
- 7-Today has been a tough day.
- 8-Through the use of animals in research, thousands of people can survive bad diseases.
- 9-To obtain some good information on visiting Lake Tahoe, a visitor can call (530)544-5050.
- 10-I couldn't figure out which methods to use.



Achieving Smooth Flow of Ideas in Writing

As a writer, you will want your ideas to flow together as smoothly as possible. Writers achieve this smooth flow of ideas, sometimes called coherence, by using a variety of techniques (*not just by using connecting words!*). Below are some suggestions that you may consider to obtain coherence in your paragraph.

1-Combine ideas using subordination and coordination. While you may have some simple sentences consisting of an independent clause, avoid strings of simple sentences. (*These techniques are not new to you; you studied about them in Writing I and Writing II already. The point is that you should always consider applying techniques you are taught already in your own writing.*)

Original: The houses are made of mud bricks. They vary in size. They contain no modern conveniences. A few have electricity.

Revised: The houses, which vary in size, are made of mud bricks. Although they contain no modern conveniences, a few have electricity.

Action! Try to revise the following sentences

Original: Robert Arneson was a famous professor and artist. He taught in the art department at UC Davis. He was a native Californian. He began his teaching job at UC Davis in 1962.

Revised:

.....

2-Point back to old information by:

* using THIS or THESE plus a noun that refers to the old information(for example, *this feature, this process, these difficulties*)

** using pronouns(for example, *he, she, it, they*) as reference words.

Examples: - On this first day of class, students write a diagnostic essay. This essay is used to help determine the strengths and weaknesses of each student's writing.

- The new residential subdivision features three different sizes and models of houses. They are all energy-efficient and reasonably priced.

3-Use introductory prepositional phrases:

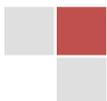
Example: I like to study in varying places, depending on the time of day. During the daytime, I like to study at home. At night, on the other hand, it is noisy at home and I prefer to study in the library.

4-Repeat key words and ideas:

Example: Caffeine withdrawal can indeed cause headaches. May coffee drinkers find that if they stop drinking coffee for one day, they get a headache. This result seems to occur whether or not the coffee drinker drinks a large or small amount of coffee everyday.

5-Use connecting words.

Note that although you should not rely on connectors alone to achieve coherence, connecting words are certainly one important aspect of flow of ideas in writing. A variety of connectors and their usages are presented in a neat list in SHEET ONE, just make use of that list!



Steps to Writing and Revising Responses to Writing Topics

After you have chosen a writing topic (or narrowed the given topic), follow these steps. These steps are designed to help you through not only the process of writing a paragraph but also the process of writing an essay.

(Again, this list of steps is not new. I put this here because I know you often ignore this list whenever you are asked to write in English. Please change your mind and your habit of writing, just to get better results in your English writing courses!)

Step 1: gathering information

Once you have selected a topic, discuss it with a classmate or in a small group

Step 2: prewriting

Working by yourself, list some of the ideas you have discussed with a classmate or in your small group. List any other ideas that come to mind related to your topic.

Step 3: writing your first draft

Use your list from prewriting to help you write your first draft. Focus on content

Step 4: sharing your draft

Working with a classmate, read each other's draft. Give feedback to each other using the format given below:

A. Reading for Content

- 1-What do you like most about this writing product?
- 2-What would you still like to know more about?
- 3-What suggestions for revision do you have for the writer?

B. Checking for Language Errors

- 1-Do you notice any patterns of language errors in the writing?
- 2-Discuss with your classmate how to correct the errors.

Step 5: revising your writing

Using your classmate's suggestions as well as your own ideas for revising, write your second draft. Focus on content and language accuracy.

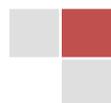
Step 6: proofreading your final copy

Read your final draft again and again. Make any necessary changes.

Now, write a paragraph of approximately 150-200 words to summarise what you've received from your reading. In your paragraph, you should include at least three main ideas:

- How to write clearly
- How to get an academic writing style
- How to get coherence in your writing

Don't consider this task as a writing assignment. This is a task for your own benefits. The better your summary paragraph is, the more you learn about the writing process and the more you can improve your own writing.



WRITING A PARAGRAPH

THE NARRATIVE PARAGRAPH

A paragraph of narration is usually to retell a story or an even, in other words, a narrative paragraph is for describing the relating of an experience. That experience may be in the past (past narration), or it may be a typical experience (what people usually do), or it may be going on now (present narration).

Below are some possible topics for your narrative paragraph

- Choose a moment when you were proud of yourself for having accomplished a goal.
- Write about a memorable experience you had while on vacation.
- Remember a time when you had luck when you least expected it.
- Reflect on an important on an important decision you have made in your life.
- Focus on a memory from childhood.
- Write about a valuable lesson you learned.
- Write about an unforgettable experience.
- Write about a person's typical routine (for example, *a typical working day, a typical Sunday*)

Some techniques in writing a narrative paragraph:

The Topic Sentence:

Generally, the topic sentence in a narrative paragraph answers briefly these key questions for the reader:

Who was involved in the event? You should write your narrative, including the topic sentence, in first person singular (I, me, my) or first person plural (we, us, our) if others are involved.

When did the even occur? Establishing a timeframe in the topic sentence helps the reader to focus his or her attention on the events. Also, the reader will understand immediately whether you are relating an event in the recent or distant past.

Where did the even occur? In many narratives the setting of the event is critical. If you state the general setting in the topic sentence, the reader will have an easier time picturing the scene than if you wait to provide all the details of the setting in the body of your narrative paragraph.

What is the focus of your narrative? Are you writing about a moment when you were proud? Are you recalling a childhood memory? Are you relating a recent decision you have made? While the topic sentence should announce the focus of your narrative, you may want to create some suspense by withholding the final outcome until later in the paragraph.

Action! Ask yourself the above questions and decide which of the following topic sentences can be considered effective topic sentences for narrative paragraphs.

1-I can remember many good times on the playground of Saluda Elementary School.

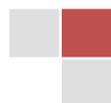
2-At my sixth-grade picnic softball game, I learned a valuable lesson about sportsmanship.

3-The summer of my twelfth year I spent a memorable Fourth of July afternoon enjoying "dinner on the grounds" with my family.

4-I spent many summer Sundays after church eating "dinner on the grounds" with my family.

Practice: *Do the exercise on your own, then discuss with other members in your group.*

Read each of the following sentences. If you think that the sentence would make a good topic sentence for a narrative paragraph, place a tick (✓) in the blank to the left. If you think that this sentence is too broad (too general) or too unfocused (vague and not effective), place an X in the blank.



- 1-. I will never forget all the good times I had on my trip last summer.
- 2-. I can still remember the first moments of my first day in first grade.
- 3-. On August 25, 1983, in a casino in Las Vegas, I learned a valuable lesson.
- 4-. One afternoon last summer my family and I took an unforgettable rafting trip on North Carolina's Nantahala River.
- 5-. During my senior year in high school I made many decisions that would affect the rest of my life.

The Supporting Details:

In the body of the narrative paragraph, just as in all paragraphs, you will support your topic sentence with specific details. Below are some points for you to notice when you write your supporting details:

A-Your supporting details should be arranged in *time order (chronological order)* so that you can recreate the experience for your reader.

* The problem is that you may make a lot of unnecessary details. It will be better if you make a list of what you remember, then cross out all the details that are irrelevant or unnecessary. Ask yourself, "Does that detail support my topic sentence and help me recreate the event for my reader?"

Action! (Work in your group)

In the following narrative paragraph, circle or highlight the sentences that are unrelated to the topic sentence. Underline all the transitional words.

On a steamy, hot summer day when I was 10 years old, I was frightened for my life. My mother had taken me along while she visited a sick friend who lived a few miles outside town. Since I had no interest in going inside the sick woman's unairconditioned house for a visit, I decided to stay outside and wait for my mother. Then I saw a beautiful field next door to the house. All I wanted to do that morning was wander around in that field, so I did. Earlier that morning I remember having cereal for breakfast. My sister and brother were away at camp. As I ran in circles in the middle of the field, I heard an incredible roar from above. I looked up and saw a small jet plane diving straight for me. My uncle used to make jet planes from models. First, I froze; then I cried out, "Mama! Where are you?" The plane continued its nose-first descent. Suddenly, the pilot pulled the plane out of its descent. I ran into the house and straight into my mother's arms. Later my mother told me that the Air National Guard had been practising runs in that area on that day and that I had probably been used for target practice. I wonder how the Air National Guard differs from the Army National Guard. I will always remember the day I learned the meaning of the word – PANIC!

B-In narrative paragraphs, you may use the following devices (words, transitional devices, phrases.) to achieve coherence.

+ *Adverbials and prepositions of time* : by, at, after, before, during, around, in, on, until, etc.

+ *Expressions of sequence*: first, next, second, then, last, finally.

+ *Adverbials of frequency*: always, usually, frequently, sometimes, rarely, ever, generally, often, occasionally, seldom, never.

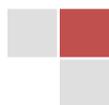
C-Some sequences of tenses are usually used in narration:

+ The simple past & past continuous tenses:

e. g : *When he got to the area, the crowd were shouting furiously.*

+ The simple present (or the present perfect) & the simple future tenses:

e. g : *As soon as he comes back, he will definitely check the list.*



D-To make your narrative paragraph interesting, you should use action verbs and adverbs (sometimes adjectives).

Examples: My friend passionately talked about her plans for the future *is better than*

My friend talked about her plans for the future.

A stereo inside her house was blaring the popular song, “Kiss” *is better than*

A stereo inside her house was playing the song, “Kiss”

The Concluding Sentence:

In a narrative paragraph it is essential that you write a concluding sentence that emphasizes the main point of your narrative. If you write about a sequence of events but do not make a point about your reaction to them, then you are doing diary writing. This type of writing is not likely to engage your reader’s interest. You should write your concluding sentence in such a way that the reader can understand the purpose of your narrative. Otherwise, your reader may end the reading of your paragraph and think, “So what?”

Action! Ask yourself the above questions and decide which of the following sentences can be considered good concluding sentences for narrative paragraphs. (You may refer to the topic sentences above)

1-I have never enjoyed any Sunday dinners as much as I did those.

2-My sixth-grade classmates taught me the meaning of the word “sportsmanship”.

3-Even now on a hot summer Sunday afternoon, I can still taste those wonderful home-cooked dishes.

4-I wish I could return to my elementary school days.

A Sample Paragraph

Test Anxiety

Every time my teacher returns a test, anxiety overcomes me. Earlier today I received my last test grade in psychology. As I gingerly walked into the classroom, I looked for reassurance from my classmates and eagerly questioned them about how they thought they had done on the test. I could feel my heart beating as the professor confidently entered the room. From the opposite side of the room, he began to pass out the test papers. I watched as each paper floated onto the top of each desk like confetti on New Year’s Eve. Hoping to receive a clue about my achievement or failure, I observed him carefully. Finally he arrived at my desk. My chest expanded as it tried to inhale as deeply as possible. My body temperature rose so high that I could feel the warmth overtake my face. My eyes widened like a cage animal alerted to danger. Then I saw “82 percent-Good!” written across the top of my test. I felt as if the air had been let out of a fully blown-up balloon-relief until next time.

by Cynthia Steyer

Read the above paragraph carefully, then write up some sentences about what you receive from the reading of this paragraph.



WRITING A PARAGRAPH

PRACTICE ON NARRATIVE PARAGRAPHS

A- Study the brainstorming result and try to make an outline, then write a narrative paragraph about a very busy morning of a Swazi housewife.

Remember to write your topic sentence and your concluding sentence carefully.

She gets up at sunrise. She goes to get the water at the public faucet with her youngest child on her back. She carefully adds mealy meal to the boiling water to make porridge. puts her youngest child on her back fastens him with a blanket. The baby begins to cry, feed him. Boil water. When the house is stirring, housewife makes sure older children dressed good in uniform. Give them porridge and to both her husband. At ten take youngest child and leave for the market. When goes home hurriedly, usually stops at the butcher's. arrives home at noon preparing the evening meal. She buys beans, onions and oranges, but sometimes also buys mangoes or bananas.

The format below will help you to draw out your outline:

Topic sentence

.....

Body:

Major idea1

.....

Supporting details:

.....

Major idea2

.....

Supporting details:

.....

Major idea3

.....

Supporting details:

.....

Concluding sentence

.....

B- Make an outline for a paragraph telling about your typical Sunday.

The format below will help you to draw out your outline:

Topic sentence

.....

Body:

Major idea1

.....

Supporting details:

.....

Major idea2

.....

Supporting details:

.....

Major idea3

.....

Supporting details:

.....



Concluding sentence

.....

GROUP WORK TOPIC

Group :
 Leader :
 Members participating :
 Person who presents :

Retelling a robbery.

You are asked to work with your friends to write a short, simple paragraph to narrate a robbery. The following data and series of questions, instructions may help you to outline what you are asked to do.

Bank robbery: central London yesterday. Butcher Street branch of the National Westminster bank.
 Before closing time, a man, gun, stock mask over head.
 A few customers in the bank at that time.
 Customers were asked to lie down on the floor.
 Cashier to put money, sack. Threaten, ask, force.
 Shot the security guard, tried to the alarm, in hospital now. Patrick's Hospital, save his life.
 Police arrested a man last night.
 The man in South London, enquires.

*At the beginning of the paragraph you should retell where, when the robbery took place. Then, some description of the robber when he entered the bank. What was he wearing, using, carrying, etc.
 What did the robber make the customers do? What did he do with the cashier, with the guard?
 Why (when) did he shoot the guard? What was the result? Who are trying to do what with the guard in hospital now?
 When and where did the police find the man. What is the man doing now?*

Narrating a picnic : A Wet Night

The following brainstorming results and questions will help you a lot. Study these carefully then make a simple outline before you start to write. Try to do your best with each of the sentences, look with great care at the choice of vocabulary, grammatical structures.

Late, after noon, the boys put up tent, middle of a field.
 Cook meal over open fire, the boys hungry, food smell good.
 Meal finish, tell stories sing songs, camp fire, it started to rain.
 Felt tired, they put out fire crept into tent.
 Sleep well, soundly in middle night, sleeping bags warm, comfortable.
 Two boys wake up, shout, water full of the tent.
 All leap out, hurry outside.



Rain heavily, a stream they found formed in the field.
Stream across the field and ran right into under the tent.

Where, when the boys put up their tent? What did they do then? How did they feel with the food? What activities did they have? Why did they put out the fire and go to bed? What made them sleep so well, soundly until midnight? Why did the two shout when they woke up? Why was there a stream? What did the stream make then?

Study the data given below, on your own, try to write a short narrative paragraph to retell what Linda and her husband, Dan, her daughter, Jenny had experienced.

- Last summer. Dan, Jenny. A day trip. Smoky Mountains.
- First stop. Inside the national park.
- Hot day. Green water look inviting
- Dane took off his shirt to swim.
- We cried: "Watch out! The water sure looks cold."
- Dane insisted on swimming. Jumped into the water.
- "Yikes!" he screamed.
- He scrambled back to the shore.
- Dane reached the shoreline. Grabbed his shirt. Ran to the car.
- Dane seemed to die of being frozen
- "I'll never complain about being hot again." Dan whined.



WRITING A PARAGRAPH

Writing an Academic Paragraph

THE DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH (Observation)

The purpose of an observation paragraph (descriptive paragraph) is to share with a reader your description of a person, an animal, an object, or a place.

When you choose a subject for a descriptive paragraph, you must narrow your focus (topic), or you will not be able to complete your observation within the limits of one paragraph. Think of yourself as a photographer. Use the zoom lens on your camera to focus on one person, one object, or one place.

Following are some topics for description:

- Description of a person: (your best friend, one of your relatives, your teacher, the person you admire the most, your favourite singer, your favourite movie star, your favourite football player.)
- Description of a place: (a photograph of a scene, your house, your own room, your hometown, your high school, your university.)
- Description of an object

The Topic Sentence:

The topic sentence of a descriptive paragraph announces the aim of your description to the reader. An effective topic sentence also communicates to the reader your overall impression of your subject (the place, person or object you are going to describe). The topic sentence, then, should answer these questions: *Whom or what did you observe and describe?* Be as specific as you can when you name the focus of your description. The use of a specific, rather than a general name, will help the reader form an immediate impression. *Why is this description memorable?* Include in the topic sentence the dominant impression that this description made on you, the observer.

Practice: *Do the exercise on your own, then discuss with other members in your group.*

Read each of the following sentences. If you think that the sentence would make a good topic sentence for a descriptive paragraph, place a tick (✓) in the blank to the left. If you think that this sentence is too broad (too general) or too unfocused (vague and not effective), place an X in the blank.

- 1-My two-year-old daughter, Frances, is beautiful when she sleeps.
- 2-The students in Ms. Campbell's English class are all interesting.
- 3-My favourite photograph is a picture of me taken when I was a carefree toddler.
- 4- This photograph of twenty-five family members at last year's reunion is a personal favourite.
- 5-The gold pocket watch lying on the table intrigues me.
- 6-All the guests at my sister's wedding enjoyed themselves at the reception.
- 7-The mountains look majestic in the distance.
- 8-The students, waiting for class to begin, are gathering outside the classroom door.
- 9- The waterfall is lovely in the early morning light.

The Supporting Details:

To make your description interesting, you should follow these techniques:

- A-Try to balance between objective observation and subjective observation: Try taking a sheet of paper and dividing it into two columns, one headed "*objective*" and one "*subjective*". On the objective side note your factual observations: what you see, what you hear, what you touch-any physical

description of the object, person or place. Also not any changes in the subject that occur during your observation. On the subjective side note your feelings or opinions about what you are observing. What are you thinking about as you make the description? Does this description remind you of any other similar observations? What is your attitude toward the subject of your description?

Example: A student made the following notes as she walked her weeks-old baby boy:

Objective

- not really sleeping
- eyes open slowly
- eyes roll to back of head
- eyes closed tightly
- lullaby music playing
- busy kitchen
- door slamming
- jerking body
- swinging hands
- dinner time

Subjective

- sleeping angel
- wants to make sure he is not missing anything
- imagines himself falling

➤ **B-**The order of the sentences and details in a descriptive paragraph is not chronological order, but is an order according to where the objects being described are located. Such an order is called spatial organization.

The supporting details of description of places or objects are generally arranged in this spatial order. For instance, if you are describing a photograph, you can begin with the top of the photograph and then work your way to the centre of the picture and finally to the details in the bottom half. Or you can begin by discussing the details to the left followed by the details in the centre and the details on the right.

Descriptions of people include details that describe physical characteristics and/or personality traits (personalities). A description of a person, for example, often starts with a physical description of hair colour, facial features, and other prominent physical characteristics.

➤ **C-**Modification & Use of specific nouns: Your descriptive paragraph will be better if you use the technique called modification ; that is adding some adjectives (or adjective equivalent) to modify a noun. *A shining new car*, for example, will be better than *a new car*, *a clear summer day* will be much better than *a summer day*. Specific nouns always give the reader great impression; for example, *Yesterday I observed a beautiful sunset at Yosemite National Park* is more effective than *Yesterday I observed a beautiful sunset at the park*. In the second sentence, the reader will not know which park you are referring to.

Example: Its head lay on the bank while its body rested in the water.
 Its head lay on the grassy bank while the remainder of its elongated,
 diamond-shaped body rested in the murky, turtle-infested water.

Action! (Work in your group)

Revise the following sentences by changing the general nouns (in bold print) to specific nouns. You may add adjectives or other descriptive words as well:

1-The sky was streaked with **colour**.

2-The light wind gently blew the **trees**.

3-The scent of **flowers** hovered in the air.



4-People strolled hand-in-hand along the **sidewalks**

.....

.....

5-I waited a long time as I sat quietly watching the **sight**.

.....

.....

➤ **D-** In order to obtain coherence as well as to keep firmly to the spatial order of the topic’s development, you should consider using the following spatial expressions (adverbs of place):

On the second floor, on the right hand side, along the back of, straight ahead, under the (windows), against (the wall), on your left, above the (bookcase), underneath (the desk), opposite the..., from these heights, to the right of, on the other side of, in the middle of, in front of, close to, and prepositions of place such as on, at, in, next to, etc.

➤ **E-**To make your paragraph more vivid, it is very important for you to use the following form of inversion: Adverb of Place + Verbs + Subject.

Example: Under the desk is a basket.
Against the wall on your left, pushed into a corner behind the head of the bed, is a large bookcase.

In a descriptive paragraph writing about a place, passive structures will certainly play an important part; the most popular form will be is (was) located, situated.

Example: This famous structure is located on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan .
The store is located on the corner of Main and Broad.

➤ **F -**In a descriptive paragraph writing about a person, the following adjectives will help you a lot in making your portrait more vivid :

- Facial expressions : *scowl, frown, smirk, worried, pained, blank, vivacious, delicate, lively, peaceful, placid.*
- Facial shapes : *round, broad, narrow, heart-shaped, moon-shaped, angular, oval.*
- Eyes : *beady, smiling, snapping, flashing, empty, staring, hard, sad, bulging.*
- Voice : *booming, rasping, squeak, harsh, growling, deep, melodious.*
- Mouth : *full-lipped, thin-lipped, set, sensuous.*
- Eyebrows : *thick, arched, neatly plucked, uneven.*

Look up in your dictionary to make use of the following words in the word bank below

Word Bank:

average height(weight), bald, bangs, chubby, curly, freckles, frizzy, hazel, mole, moustache, plump, shoulder-length, skinny, slender, wavy.

ambitious, artistic, boring, brave, competitive, creative, dependable, energetic, enthusiastic, friendly, funny, generous, hardworking, helpful, honest, jealous, kind, lazy, messy, neat, optimistic, organized, patient, quiet, responsible, selfish, sensitive, serious, shy, social, studious, talkative, thrifty.

➤ **G-**Sentence Combining: A series of short, choppy sentences can ruin the effect of a description. Please read the section of “Some techniques for combining sentences”!

A Sample Paragraph

An Angel Sleeping

Even though my son is only three weeks old, he has a distinct personality all his own. Today he looks peaceful and content as he rests in his crib. He is not really asleep, though. His eyes slowly open to peek as if he wants to make sure he is not missing anything. I tiptoe a few steps back to sneak out of his view for fear he might see me and wake up all the way. He is fighting to stay awake. His eyes roll to the back of his head as his eyelids struggle to stay open. A few minutes later his eyes are closed



tightly. Is it the lullaby music playing that makes him sleep? I know it cannot be the racket in the house. I can hear cabinets banging in the kitchen. Dishes clink together as dinner is being prepared for the rest of the family. Although the house is bustling with activity, the baby is sleeping like an angel. Someone slams door, and the baby reacts by jerking his body and swinging his hands. Perhaps he is imagining himself falling. Maybe he is dreaming about swinging in his swing on the deck by the water. Finally, the lullaby stops, and the family finishes eating dinner. The baby begins to cry loudly for his supper. Big, grayish-blue eyes stare at me. This waking-sleeping-waking goes on all day and through the night.

Discuss in your group on what you receive from reading the above sample.



WRITING A PARAGRAPH

Some Techniques in Combining Sentences*Guiding steps***1-“Subordinating” pattern**

Examples: a-*I washed the windows thoroughly. They still looked dirty.*
 → *Although I washed the windows thoroughly, they still looked dirty.*
 b-(relative constructions)

Clyde picked up a hitchhiker. The hitchhiker was traveling around the world
 → *Clyde picked up a hitchhiker who was traveling around the world.*

2-“Coordinating” pattern: use a comma between independent clauses connected by AND, BUT, FOR, NOR, SO, YET, etc.

Examples *I watered my dropping African violets. They perked right up.*
 → *I watered my dropping African violets and they perked right up.*

3-ING word pattern

Examples a-*I jogged everyday. I soon raised my energy level.*
 → *Jogging everyday, I soon raised my energy level.*
 b-*The doctor hoped for the best. He examined the x-rays.*
 → *The doctor, hoping for the best, examined the x-rays.*

4-ED word pattern

Examples a-*I was tired of studying. I took a short break.*
 → *Tired of studying, I took a short break.*
 b-*I opened my eyes. I was shocked by the red “F” on my paper.*
 → *I opened my eyes, shocked by the red “ F” on my paper.*
 c-*Mary was amused by the joke. She told it to a friend.*
 → *Mary, amused by the joke, told it to a friend.*

5-Appositive pattern

Examples *Rita is a good friend of mine. She works as a police officer.*
 → *Rita, a good friend of mine, works as a police officer.*

6-LY-opener pattern

Examples I gave several yanks to the starting cord of the lawn. I was angry.
 → *Angrily, I gave several yanks to the starting cord of the lawn.*

7-TO-opener pattern

Examples *I fertilize the grass every spring. I want to make it greener.*
 → *To make the grass greener, I fertilize it every spring.*

8-Prepositional phrase-opener pattern

Examples A fire started. It did this at 5 A.M. It did this inside the garage.
 → *At 5 A.M., a fire started inside the garage.*

9-“Series of items” pattern

Examples *In the dingy bar Sam shelled peanuts. He slipped a beer. He talked up a storm with friends.*
 → *In the dingy bar, Sam shelled peanuts, slipped a beer, and talked up a storm with friends.*

Practice

Combine each of groups of sentences into one sentence by using the above techniques.

1-My son spilled the pickle jar at dinner. I had to wash the kitchen floor.



2-Sidney likes loud music. His parents can't stand it. He wears earphones.

3-Sally had a haircut today. She came home and looked in the mirror. She decided to wear a hat for a few days. She thought she looked like a bald eagle.

4-The tourists began to leave the bus. They picked up their cameras.

5-I was almost hit by a car, I was jogging on the street.

6-Mary sat up suddenly in bed. She was startled by a sudden thunderclap.

7-Ellen wouldn't leave her car. She was frightened by the large dog near the curb.

8-The old orange felt like a marshmallow. It was dotted with mold.

9-Hank Sullivan lost his right arm in a drunk-driving accident. Hank Sullivan is a well-known painter.

10-My grandmother rides a bicycle to the corner grocery. The bicycle is an antique with a large basket in back.

11-Cliff spoke to his sobbing little brother. He was gentle.

12-I paced up and down the hospital corridor. I was anxious.

13-My aunt opens her dishwasher when it began drying. She does this to steam her face.

14-We have dinner with my parents. We do this about once a week. We do this at a restaurant.

15-The dancer whirled across the stage with his partner. The dancer was lean. The dancer was powerful. The partner was graceful. The partner was elegant.



WRITING A PARAGRAPH

*Writing an Academic Paragraph***PRACTICE ON DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPHS****GROUP WORK TOPICS**

Group _____ : Leader _____ :

Members participating :

Draft a paragraph on describing a person you know well

You are asked to describe at least two persons (a man and a woman) whose photos you have just received. You are invited to create any further details to make your descriptions more vivid, more interesting.

Some of the features you should include in your descriptions are:

- + general description: name, age, nationality, family, occupation.
- + appearance: facial description, body, and any special details.
- + hobbies, plans for the future.
- + personalities
- + any features that you think will impress the reader.

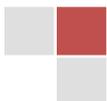
Try all your best to make your friends and teacher impressed by your writing!

A special present will be awarded to the group of the highest scores!

Topic sentence:

Body of the paragraph: (Just your drafting. Remember to pay attention to parallelism)

Concluding sentence



WRITING A PARAGRAPH

Writing an Academic Paragraph

THE EXPOSITORY PARAGRAPH

The purpose of an expository paragraph is to explain or analyze a topic. Although explaining a topic can be done in several ways, the most common approach to develop an expository paragraph requires using specific details and examples. Obviously, the topic sentence of an expository does not suggest that you tell a story or describe a scene or a person; rather, it suggests that you support the controlling idea with information, explanation, facts, or illustrations.

Organization of Supporting Details

Following are the three common types of order you may apply when you write an expository paragraph:

1-Order of Importance: *Saving the Best for Last.* When you are developing a topic sentence with details and examples, one of the examples is more impressive than the others. It is always wise to place the most impressive example at the end of paragraph.

2-Order of Familiarity: *From the More Familiar to the Less Familiar.* When the details in the expository paragraph are mostly factual, it is common to begin with the most obvious or familiar detail and move toward the less obvious or less familiar detail.

3-Order of Time: *From the Past to the Present.* When the details and examples in a paragraph are taken from history or are events that have taken place, it is often a good idea to order the examples according to chronology.

Transitional Words and Phrases

One of the most important techniques in writing your subordinating details is to use transitional words and phrases. You should look back at the list I gave you in SHEET ONE.

Examples: *an example of, the most significant example, the most startling example, another example, an additional example, to illustrate, for example, for instance, first, second, next, then, last, finally, to begin with, also, furthermore, moreover, in addition, besides that, besides, however, nevertheless, in conclusion, to sum up, etc.*

Sample Paragraphs:*A Popular but Messy Food*

Eating a juicy taco is not easy—it requires following specific directions. First, you must be sure you are wearing clothes that you don't mind getting dirty. Eating a taco while you are wearing an expensive silk blouse is not a smart idea. The next thing that you should do is to decide if you want to eat the taco alone or in front of others. Eating a taco in front of someone you do not know very well, such as a new date, can be embarrassing. The last step is to plan your attack! It is a good idea to pick up the taco gently and carefully keep it in a horizontal position. As you raise the taco, slowly turn your head toward it and position your head at a twenty-degree angle. The last step is to put the corner of the taco in your mouth and bite. By following these simple directions, eating a taco can be a pleasant experience.

A Day-Care Centre

There are several ways that the community would benefit from the establishment of a day-care centre. First, it would give non-English speakers a chance to go to school to learn English, and they would become more integrated into the life of the community. Beside

improving community relations, a day-care centre would help non-English –speaking parents raise their standard of living because, if they learn English, they could get better jobs. Also, the parents would be able to help their children with their schoolwork and communicate with their teachers. Moreover, a day care-centre would give non-English-speaking children and English-speaking children a chance to get to know each other. Finally, all parents (not just non-English speakers) would have a place to leave their children while they work.

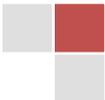
➤ Write all the notes you may got from reading the two above paragraphs here:

.....

.....

.....

.....



- a-At 7:18 the next morning, a severe earthquake measuring 8.1 on the Richter scale hit Mexico City. I was asleep, but the violent movement of my bed from side to side woke me up. Then I could hear the rumble of the building as it was shaking.
- b-As I tried to stand up, I could hear the stucco walls of the building cracking. I was on the third floor of a six-story building, and I thought the building was going to collapse. I really believed that I was going to die.
- c- I flew to Mexico City on September 17. The first two days were uneventful.
- d- My trip to Mexico City in September 1985 was not my first visit there, but this unforgettable trip helped me realize something about life.
- e- I visited a few friends and did a little sightseeing. On the evening of the eighteenth, I had a late dinner with some friends that I had not seen in several years. It was a very peaceful evening.
- f- In the end, approximately 5,000 people died in this terrible tragedy, but I was lucky enough not to be among them. This unexpected disaster taught me that life can be over at any minute, so it is important for us to live everyday as if it is our last.
- g- When I looked at my room, I could see that the floor was moving up and down like water in the ocean. Because the doorway is often the stronger part of a house, I tried to stand up in the doorway of the bedroom, but I could not even stand up.

B-The following sentences make up a paragraph. Read the sentences. Then number them from 1 to 6 to indicate the correct order. Put an O or an F on the line before each sentence to indicate whether it contains fact or opinion:

- a-The damage of these rays may not be seen immediately in children, but adults who spent a lot of time in the sun when they were children have a much higher chance of developing skin cancer than adults who did not spend time in the sun.
- b-Too much time in the sun can cause severe skin damage, especially in young children.
- c-This disease, which can be deadly if it is not treated quickly, is a direct result of the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays.
- d-In conclusion, the information in this paragraph is enough evidence to persuade parents not to let their children play outside in the sun.
- e-Although many people enjoy playing in the sun, parents should limit the number of hours that children play outside.
- f-The most serious example of this is skin cancer.

C- The following sentences make up a paragraph. Number them from 1 to 8 to indicate the best order. Then underline all the time words or phrases:

- a-Hit the ball into the small box on the opposite side of the net.
- b-After you hit the ball, continue swinging your racket down and across the front of your body.
- c-Just before the ball reaches its peak, begin to swing your racket forward as high as you can reach.
- d-First, toss the ball with your left hand about three feet in the air. The best position for the ball is just to the right of your head.
- e-At the same time, move your racket behind your shoulder with your right hand so

that your elbow is pointed at the sky.

.....f-After you have completed the serve, your racket should be near your left knee.

.....g-Many people think serving in tennis is difficult, but the following steps show that it is quite easy.

.....h-If you are left-handed, you should substitute the words *left* and *right* in the preceding direction.

D-These sentences make one paragraph. Read the sentences and number them from 1 to 7 to indicate the best order:

.....a- Similarly, an English speaker learning Malay might remember the word PINTU, which means “door”, by using the English words PIN and INTO.

.....b-The learner might remember that he or she can use a hatchet eight times to cut down a tree.

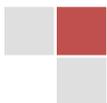
.....c-The key-word method, which can help foreign language learners remember new vocabulary, is gaining popularity among teachers and students.

.....d-Through these two simple examples, we can get an idea of how useful this method of remembering vocabulary can be.

.....e-For example, a Japanese learner of English might look at the English word HATCHET and connect it to the Japanese word HACHI(‘eight’) because they sound alike.

.....f-In this method, learners first form their own sound association between the foreign language word they are trying to learn and a word in their native language. In the second stage, learners form an image link between the target word and the native language word.

.....g-He or she can imagine putting a pin into the door to open it.



WRITING A PARAGRAPH

APPENDIX *Writing an Academic Paragraph*

My Macy's Nightmare

I'll never forget the first time I got lost in New York City. I was travelling with my parents during summer vacation. We were in Macy's department store, and I was so excited to see such a huge place. Suddenly, I turned around to ask my mom something, but she was gone! I began crying and screaming at the top of my lungs. A salesclerk came up to me and asked if I was okay. She got on the public address system and notified the customers that a little boy with blue jeans and a red cap was lost. Two minutes later my mom and dad came running toward me. We all cried and hugged each other. I'll never forget that day as long as I live.

A Lesson in Friendship

I learned the hard way how to make friends in a new school. At my old school in New Jersey, I was on the football and track team, so I was very popular and had lots of friends. Then, when I was sixteen years old, my parents decided to move to Florida. Going to a new school was not easy for me. The first few days in my new school were extremely hard. All the students dressed casually in shorts and T-shirts instead of a school uniform. Some kids tried to be nice to me, but I didn't want to talk to them. They looked and acted funny! After a few weeks, I realized that no one even tried to talk to me anymore. I began to feel lonely. Two months passed before I swallowed my pride and got the courage to talk to a few classmates. Finally, I realized that they were normal people, just like me. I began to develop some relationships, I learned a valuable lesson about making friends that year.

My Favourite Place

My bedroom is small but comfortable. The walls are covered with posters and banners of my favourite sports teams. On the left side there is a twin bed that I have had since I was ten years old. Next to the bed is my dresser. It is blue and white with gold knobs. Beside the dresser is my bookshelf, which holds most of my schoolbooks, dictionaries, and Kurt Vonnegut novels. Across from the bookshelf you can see my closet. It's too small to hold all my clothes, so some of my stuff has permanently residence on my chair. The clothes get wrinkled there, but I don't mind. My mom doesn't like it that my room is so messy, so one of these days I'm going to clean it up and make her happy.

Read the paragraphs above carefully, then take notes of what you think you may "imitate" these writers in your own writing of a paragraph.

.....
.....
.....
.....



Describe a room:

My fourteen-year-old daughter's room is a colourful mess. Immediately to the left of the door are a yellow hanging rack with a white, shoulder-length purse and her closet with the door ajar. Hanging clothes and games as well as toy boxes are crammed in the closet. Neither the toys nor the clothing is in any apparent order. Next come the desk and the bookcase. Each of her desk drawers is stuffed with papers. The bookcase with two rows of books, various magazines rests on top of the desk. Her collection of stuffed animals including rabbits, bears, and kangaroos is showcased on top of the bookcase. Papers, pencils, earrings, and other junk litter her desk top.

Writing an Academic Paragraph

Following are sample paragraphs for “*Practice on Expository Paragraphs*”

Applying to an American University

Although the process for applying to an American university is not complicated, it is important to follow each step. The first step is to choose several schools that you are interested in attending. Next, write to these schools to ask for information, catalogues, and applications. You may also want to visit the school's Web sites. After you have researched several schools, narrow your list to three or five. Then mail all the required forms and documents only to your final list of three to five schools. If the school of your choice requires you to take a standardized test, be sure to do so early. In addition, ask various school officials and teachers to write letters of recommendation for you if the university requires them. Finally, almost schools have an application fee. This should be sent in the form of a check or money order. One last piece of advice is to start early because thousands of high school students are all applying at the same time.

School Uniforms Should Receive an A+

School uniforms should be mandatory for all students for a number of reasons. First, they make everyone equal. In this way, the “rich” kids are on the same level as the poor ones. In addition, getting ready for school can be much faster and easier. Many kids waste time choosing what to wear to school, and they are often unhappy with their final choices. Most important, some studies show that school uniforms make students perform better. Many people might say that uniforms take away from personal freedom, but I believe the benefits are stronger than the drawbacks.

Dying with Dignity

Studies show that there has been an increase in the number of people who support “medicine,” which happens when people with terminal diseases choose to end their lives rather than continue living. One common argument for this growing support is that people should not be forced to continue living if they are in severe pain and cannot live with this constant pain. A second reason is that staying in the hospital for a long time often causes a financial burden on the family. Terminally ill people often worry about the hardship that this will cause their families. Finally, people who are dying sometimes lose hope. Even if they are alive, they can often only lie in bed, and for some people, this is not “life”.



While many people believe that medicine is an “unnatural way to die” and should remain illegal, sick people should certainly have the right to end their lives if they want.

Practice:

This paragraph contains seven errors. They are in passive voice (1), articles (2), word forms (3), and subject-verb agreement (4). Mark these errors and write the correction.

Problems with American Coins

Many foreigners who come to the United States have very hard time getting used to American coins. The denominations of the coins are 1,5,10,25, and 50 cents, and 1 dollar. However, only the first four commonly used in daily transactions. The smallest coin in value is the penny, but it is not the smallest coin in size. The quarter is one-fourth the value of a dollar but it is not one-fourth as big as a dollar. There is a dollar coin, but no one ever use it. In fact, perhaps the only place to find one is a bank. All of the coins are silver-coloured except for one, the penny. Finally, because value of each coin is not clearly written on the coin as it is in many country, foreigners often experience problem in monetarily transactions.

One more sample expository paragraph:

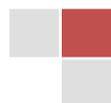
A Unique Treat

Turkish coffee is not easy to make, but the results are delicious. First, you need a special coffeepot called a **jezve**. This is a long-handled, open brass or copper pot. Pour three small cups of water into the pot. Next, heat the water until it boils. Then remove the pot from the heat. Adds three teaspoons of coffee and three teaspoons of sugar to the water. Gently stir the mixture and return it to the heat until you can see foam on the top. When you can see the foam on top, take the **jezve** from the heat and hit it lightly with a spoon to make the foam go down. Reheat the coffee and tap the pot two more times, making sure to remove it from the heat each time the foam forms. Before you serve the coffee, give everyone a small glass of fresh water to drink with their hot, thick coffee.

Practice: *Now, try to find any pieces of instructions in using a machine, in cooking something (instructions in using a shampoo, in drinking a powered-milk, etc.) and write a similar paragraph.*

The Topic Bank

- Write a paragraph about what you do in the morning.
- Think of a parade that is held in your country each year (such as an Independence Day parade). Make a list of the things people do before and during the parade. From that list, think of a controlling idea about your topic. Then write a paragraph about what people usually do at the parade. Be sure that the sentences all support the controlling idea. (If there is no annual parade in your country, describe what people generally do at any kind of parade or procession.)
- Pretend that you are a news reporter at the scene of an accident or a fire. You are reporting live on camera. Your paragraph might begin like this: “This isreporting for WKBY-TV News.”. Complete your report.
- Think of a holiday or ritual in your country that occurs every year. Write down the sequence of events for one small part of the holiday. Then think of a controlling idea. Be sure to limit yourself to only one aspect of the holiday. Then choose your support and write a paragraph.
- Think of a frightening or amusing experience you have had. Try to choose a relatively minor event so that you can adequately describe it in one paragraph.
- Write a paragraph that describes an incident in your life when you learned a lesson.



- Think of a significant historical event that took place in your lifetime. Write a paragraph about what you were doing that day.
- Think of a folk tale that you are familiar with. Choose a short tale, because you are going to write only one paragraph. Then write a paragraph. Be sure to include a controlling idea.
- Think of a room in the dormitory or in your apartment or house. Write down the objects in the room. Then think about how you could describe them. Now write a paragraph.
- Write a paragraph describing your favourite place, either indoors or outdoors. Since you are writing just one paragraph, be sure to narrow down the area you are going to write about. For example, if this place is a park, choose just one small area of the park.
- Find a picture of a place. Choose a picture of a building, a disaster area, or a room. Then plan a paragraph. Decide on a controlling idea. Be sure to use spatial organization. Write the paragraph.
- Think about a horrible-looking creature from movies or pictures. Write a paragraph describing its face or another part of it—such as its hands. Narrow down your topic and write a very detailed descriptive paragraph.
- Assume you have a pen pal in another country. Write a paragraph describing your physical appearance. You might want to describe your face, or you may prefer to describe one or two of your outstanding features.
- The devastation from such natural disasters as floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, hail storms, or droughts is awesome. Write a paragraph giving examples of the devastation caused by a natural disaster.
- Every country has proverbs. Some popular ones in the United States are “The early bird catches the worm” and “A stitch in time saves nine.” Think of a popular proverb in your country and translate it into good English. Using the proverb as your topic sentence, write a paragraph with an anecdote from your life that shows the truth of this statement.
- Does a generation gap exist between a young person you know and his or her parents? Write a paragraph giving examples showing that the generation gap exists.
- Make a generalization about a person you know and then write a paragraph supporting that generalization with examples or an anecdote. For instance, you might begin with, “My little brother has done some amusing things.” You could support this generalization with an illustration, an anecdote, or perhaps you could give several examples of amusing things he had done.
- Write about the worst (or best) day of your life. What happened? When did this happen? Why did this happen? What was the result?
- What do you think will be the highest-paying occupation fifty years from now? Give reasons to support your opinion.
- What is the definition of a perfect parent? What are the characteristics of such a person?
- Choose a mechanical device (for example, a television, a car engine a fax machine). How does it work? Explain the process step by step.
- The United Nations was formed in 1945 to promote world peace. However, some people think that the United States is useless. Do you think the United Nations is doing a good job? Should the United Nations continue to exist? Why or why not?
- Choose an emotion such as love or jealousy. How does the dictionary define it? Is it a good emotion or a bad emotion? Who usually feels this emotion and why? Give some examples.
- What is freedom? Why do people want it? Should there be limitations on freedom? Can there be limitations? Explore the nature of freedom.
- Choose a scientific or medical term, such as GRAVITY, TIDES, MOLECULE, APPENDIX, AIDS, or PEDIATRICS. What is it? Why is it important?
- Describe how to make a food dish.
- What steps does a successful job applicant follow?

- Describe how to explore the World Wide Web.
- Describe a national monument that is important to you. What does it look like? What feelings does the monument inspire in you?
- Describe a family tradition. When do you follow the tradition? Why is the tradition important to you and your family?



Name:

Class:

WRITING THREE

Writing academic paragraphs

Part One: *Use your own words to define the following terms:*

1-Chronological order:

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2-Spatial order:

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3-Modification: *(Give an example to illustrate.)*

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4- A narrative paragraph:

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5-A descriptive paragraph:

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The Final Task

You may choose one the following topics to write a paragraph of about 150-200 words. Be greatly careful of your choice of words, uses of tenses, applications of structures and ... spelling! Write in your own sheet of paper. The topics are rather challenging. Think carefully before you go!

A-Think about the positive role relaxation plays in our lives. What is your favorite place to relax and why?

B-Write about something you have always thought about doing but have never done, perhaps because the opportunity never presented itself or you were afraid or reluctant to carry out your plans. Explain what you have wanted to do and why you would like or would have liked to do it.

C-Most individuals would agree that we learn not only in formal classroom situations but that much of our learning also goes on outside of school. Write about an important learning experience that you have had outside of the classroom. Explain the experience and what you learned from it.

D-Talk about a certain website that you usually enjoy visiting, you may describe the ways it looks, the content it presents or whatever you like mentioning, please remember to mention the address.

E- Your pen friend from Australia is going to arrive in Dalat next month. Write him or her a letter to describe clearly how to get to the gate of Dalat University from the City Bus Stop. You should mention the directions, some of the well-known buildings or places in the university's neighborhood to help your friend find the way more easily, means of transport your friend should take, who in the street he or she should ask for direction, etc. At the City Bus Stop in Dalat these days, some of the *xe-om* drivers, and taxi drivers usually play a lot of tricks on visitors, especially on foreigners to get much money from them. Remember to include this situation in your letter and tell your friend how to avoid them.

F-During the coming summer vacation, I will definitely hold a writing contest for all the students of *Writing II*, *Writing III* courses in the department. In the contest, the candidates are asked to...write in English, of course, to show their knowledge of the language. If you want to participate in the contest to ...win the prize of 300.000 VND, what will you write about (what you think you can read to make detailed reports: grammar points, history of English, the changes of English, the dialects, the idioms, the summary of certain stories in English, the countries speaking English, etc.)? Now, you may make a very simple summary about what you are going to present in the contest. Note that the contest requires you of a written product of at least 1000 words. You are warmly welcomed to participate in the contest! You may register at the department office, or email me at thanhhungdal@yahoo.com to enroll your names. Just write your full name, identification number and say why you want to join us.

Write your paragraph on the next page. Good luck in your examinations!

