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Without subdivisions or clear markers of organization, writing becomes confusing and tiring to read. Students often have a tendency to ramble on about a topic, and they forget to indent. Learning how to write powerful paragraphs will help students organize their thoughts more effectively. Their ideas will flow more logically and smoothly.

### Launching Activity: Powerful Paragraphs (Overhead 1)

After going over the introductory sentence on the overhead and the information about paragraphs, examine “The U.S. Army Camel Corps” passage with students. Point out the indentations for each paragraph.

To ease students into the exercise at the bottom of the overhead, you may want to model your response to the first sentence. The first sentence tells about where the Army looked for camels to bring to the United States. That information would fit in the first paragraph because that paragraph is about how the Army decided to use camels and when they arrived in this country. The last paragraph is about when and why the Army decided not to use the camels anymore. By doing this, you’ll be indirectly guiding students to think about the main idea of each paragraph. Also call on different students to read aloud the last paragraph with one of the four sentences attached to the end so everyone in the class can hear the flow of information.

### Student Reproducibles

Different Types of Paragraphs: Provide each student with a copy of this Different Types of Paragraphs reproducible for them to keep in their notebook. Review the four types of paragraphs included on the graphic organizer: expository, descriptive, persuasive, and narrative. Remind them that all paragraphs are alike in that they are a group of sentences about one main idea.

What Am I?: Have students use the Different Types of Paragraphs reproducible to determine each paragraph type presented on this page. Encourage them to point out specific features from each paragraph that support their conclusions.
Order! Order!: You may want to have small groups of students work together to complete the reproducible. Encourage them to jot ideas on separate sheets of paper as they read the sentences. Remind students to look for a beginning sentence that presents a main idea and an ending sentence that reinforces the idea. Another key point for students is to link sentences that are related. Some students may find it helpful to cut apart the sentences and physically rearrange them. Finally, to sharpen students’ response to the flow of the paragraph, explain how helpful it can be to read aloud combinations of sentences. Ask volunteers to choose two or three related sentences to read aloud.

▲ Writing Practice
Gather a variety of high-interest short articles from magazines and newspapers. Duplicate the articles and cut apart the paragraphs. Store two articles in one envelope. Then challenge pairs of students to put the articles back together, paragraph by paragraph. They can glue the articles onto separate sheets of paper. To extend the practice, have partners rewrite the articles without indenting the paragraphs. Let pairs exchange articles and rewrite them with paragraph breaks. Discuss students’ responses to reading the unindented paragraphs.
Different Types of Paragraphs
This graphic organizer describes the four different types of paragraphs.

**Expository Paragraphs**
An expository paragraph “exposes” information through facts and details.

**Persuasive Paragraphs**
A persuasive paragraph presents a statement and then supports it.

**A Paragraph**
A paragraph is a group of sentences about one main idea.

**Narrative Paragraphs**
A narrative paragraph tells a story.

**Descriptive Paragraphs**
A descriptive paragraph portrays a vivid picture or a person, place, or thing.
What Am I?

Read each paragraph below. Decide if it is a narrative, expository, persuasive, or descriptive paragraph.

1. Even though the tugboat is a small boat, it has big jobs to perform. For example, the tugboat helps to push and pull huge freighters and ocean liners in and out of city harbors. It helps maneuver large ships into their docks. Also, it pulls barges in and out of the harbor and along the coast. The tugboat, though small, is very powerful.

   **Paragraph type:**

2. The Arctic polar bear is a large and formidable hunter. This enormous animal has huge hairy paws, long sharp claws, and powerful canine teeth. Its huge seven-foot body is covered with thick white hair. When the Arctic polar bear hunts a seal, first it silently pads up to the seal hole in the ice, waiting patiently for the seal to stick its head out of the water. Then, with a powerful blow of its huge paw, the bear kills its prey, drags it out of the hole, and tears its flesh with its powerful teeth. The polar bear is the largest of all bears.

   **Paragraph type:**

3. Luke thought he’d be a natural when it came to snowboarding. After all, he’d been skateboarding and skiing for years. How different could it be? All it took was one trip, one very bumpy trip, down the slope to see that it was different. He had been excited as he rode up the chairlift to the top of the Double-Cross ski trail. Conditions were perfect: it was bright and sunny, and a fresh layer of snow covered everything. Luke was ready. Feeling exhilarated, he pushed off, headed down the slope, and fell immediately. None of his skiing or skateboarding experience had prepared him for this! He just couldn’t maintain his balance. It was a long trip down to the bottom. Wet and frustrated, he was ready to give up. Just then, his friend Melinda snowboarded to his side. “I saw you coming down the slope,” she said. “Want some pointers?” Melinda showed him how to maintain his balance and maneuver down the slope. After his fifth time down, Luke felt ecstatic. He wasn’t the natural he’d hoped to be, but Melinda had put him on the road—or slope—to snowboard success.

   **Paragraph type:**

4. To what extent should drivers of all-terrain vehicles determine how our woodlands are used? This is a question that concerns all of us who like to explore the Catskill Mountains. Here at the Mountain Post, we believe that our forests and hills attract residents and tourists who like hiking through the wild, untouched beauty and silence of the woods and hills. We feel that all-terrain vehicles destroy these attractions. The vehicles are noisy. Drivers cut muddy paths through forests, destroying plants and frightening animals away. The question of access to our woodlands is currently before our state legislators. We urge all of you who love the wildness of our mountains to write to our state representatives. Urge them to conserve our hills by prohibiting vehicles.

   **Paragraph type:**