OVERHEAD WRITING LESSONS

POWERFUL PARAGRAPHS

by Carol Rawlings Miller
and Sarah Glasscock
This book is dedicated to Jack.
—CRM

Acknowledgments
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—CRM
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Learning to paragraph is an essential stage for all writers. The ability to organize and sustain a coherent composition derives from paragraphing competence. The activities and exercises in this book will help students develop strong paragraphing skills by having them read, analyze, and write paragraphs.

**The Approach of This Book**

This book addresses the following aspects of paragraphing:

- the definition of a paragraph
- the types of paragraphs
- a paragraph’s structure
- developing a paragraph
- transition words in a paragraph
- editing and proofreading paragraphs

We suggest that you teach the lessons in sequence, as they build upon one another. Many of the paragraphs in the lessons on the structure and development of paragraphs are expository since students will encounter this type most frequently.

An overhead transparency accompanies each of the ten lessons in this book. The transparencies are designed to give a brief overview and to present examples for the class to analyze together. Each lesson also includes at least one reproducible that provides students with more practice and/or reference sheets. We suggest that you display the overhead for reference as students work on the reproducibles.

The teaching pages display the pertinent National Language Arts Standards for each lesson. You’ll also find information here about how to present the overhead transparencies and the reproducibles. Writing Practice is a feature that allows students to apply the skills in their own writing. Some lessons include a section called Enriching the Lesson, which expounds on the topic.

**On Teaching Paragraphing**

When you ask students to write, remind them to paragraph and indent. Keep in mind, however, that an overemphasis on paragraphing can lead beginning writers to become prematurely attentive to structure at a time when they need to build stamina as writers.

Also keep in mind that there are so many skills involved in writing, and we teachers don’t want to overwhelm and discourage students. If a child writes his or her first amazing story but forgets to indent some paragraphs, it’s more important to celebrate
what is happening rather than what is not. The lack of indentations can be fixed easily, while the lack of a coherent narrative cannot. It’s also extremely important to emphasize that producing a polished piece of writing is a process. Clear and coherent writing takes more than one draft. All kinds of problems can be fixed in the later drafts of a work.

**On Overhead Writing Lessons**

*Strong Sentences, Powerful Paragraphs,* and *Exceptional Essays* comprise the Overhead Writing Lessons series of books. Each book targets and teaches specific grammar and writing skills that will make your students better and more confident writers.
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: _______________________
Order! Order!

Place the sentences in order to create a paragraph. Write the number 1 beside the first sentence, and so on. Then rewrite the paragraph on another sheet of paper.

Living in the Desert

• These muscles enable the animal to carry heavy loads for long distances. _____

• At a gallop, racing camels can do 12 miles per hour. _____

• The hump is a mound of fatty tissue that can shrink. _____

• A camel’s legs are long and thin, but they are very muscular. _____

• For instance, a camel can carry almost 1,000 pounds, but a load of about 400 pounds is the best weight. _____

• If no food is available, a camel gets energy from this fatty tissue. _____

• The typical distance a camel can walk each day is 25 miles. _____

• When a camel walks, the pads of its feet spread. _____

• With its hump and long legs, the camel may look funny, but it’s uniquely suited to living in the desert. _____

• A walking camel travels about 3 miles per hour. _____

• Many people think that a camel’s hump is filled with water, but this isn’t true. _____

• This keeps the camel’s feet from sinking into the sand. _____

• The lack of food in a desert and its soft, sandy surface are no problems for a camel! _____
The Structure of a Paragraph

Purpose

To introduce the parts of a paragraph

Before students can write a coherent and engaging paragraph, they must have an understanding of its structure. It’s very easy for beginning writers—and even those who are experienced—to wander off the topic. Understanding the role of the topic sentence and the concluding sentence will help students focus on their subject. Recognizing that the body of a paragraph contains detail sentences that support the topic sentence will enable students to weed out unnecessary information that may creep into their work. And finally, using transition words and phrases will make their writing smoother and more logical.

Launching Activity: The Structure of a Paragraph (Overhead 2)

Now that students know what a paragraph is, they can move on to explore its structure.

Begin by reading aloud the paragraph or asking a volunteer to do so. Then use the questions at the bottom of the overhead to discuss the paragraph. You’ll be able to mine your students’ answers as you introduce structure later.

Then remind students that “The Midnight Ride of Sybil Luddington” is an expository paragraph, but that all types of paragraphs share the same structure. Label and identify each part of the paragraph on the overhead as they appear on the reproducible on page 13, A Paragraph up Close and Personal: title, topic sentence, transition words and phrases, detail sentences, body, and concluding sentence. Then explain each part. Be sure to refer to the comments your students made in your earlier discussion of the paragraph. For instance, you might say something like the following about the title: The title of a paragraph is important because it gives a clue as to what the paragraph will be about. It should also draw in the reader so he or she will want to know more. Remember when Max said the title made him think of Paul Revere and his midnight ride? He was curious if the paragraph was about another event that happened during the American Revolution. Since Max is really interested in that topic, he was eager to read the paragraph.
**Student Reproducibles**

Make extra copies of both reproducibles for students to keep in their notebooks.

A Paragraph up Close and Personal: This reproducible labels the parts of the paragraph shown on The Structure of a Paragraph overhead. Remind students to refer to it as they write their own paragraphs.

Outlining Your Paragraph: To check students’ comprehension of the parts of a paragraph, have them work backward. Display The Structure of a Paragraph overhead, without the parts labeled. Then ask students to identify the essential parts of the paragraph and write them on the reproducible. You can extend the use of this reproducible by having students identify the parts of other complete paragraphs from magazines or encyclopedia entries. Since there aren’t enough lines on the reproducible to include all the details in the body, have students include the ones they feel are the most important.

**Writing Practice**

Brainstorm a list of potential expository paragraph topics with students. Although you may have to kick-start the discussion, encourage students to contribute topics that really interest them. At this point, the topics may be broad, such as Birds or Peregrine Falcons. The next lesson, Topic Sentences and Detail Sentences, will give you ideas on how to help students narrow their focus to create strong topic sentences.
A Paragraph up Close and Personal

Although paragraphs may have different subjects, they all share the same structure.

The Midnight Ride of Sybil Luddington

Like Paul Revere, sixteen-year-old Sybil Luddington saved the day by taking a midnight ride during the American Revolution. On April 26, 1777, the British attacked Danbury, Connecticut. They began to burn the Americans’ houses and possessions. Soon, the British would find and destroy the American militia’s weapons stored in the town. Many of the colonial militia in the area were farmers. They were at home because it was planting season. A messenger rode to the house of Henry Luddington with the news. Luddington decided to call the militia to meet at his house by morning. When the messenger said he and his horse were too tired to ride and tell everyone in the countryside, Sybil Luddington volunteered to go. In the darkness of night, she rode for more than forty miles on mostly unfamiliar roads, stopping only long enough to bang on shutters and shout her message. By the next morning, nearly all of the colonial militia had gathered at the Luddingtons’ house. Soon they were on the march. Thanks to Sybil Luddington, the British were driven out of Danbury.
Outlining Your Paragraph

The Topic Is: ____________________________________________________________

Title: ________________________________________________________________________________

Topic Sentence: ____________________________________________________________________________

Detail: ______________________________________________________________________________________

Detail: ______________________________________________________________________________________

Detail: ______________________________________________________________________________________

Detail: ______________________________________________________________________________________

Detail: ______________________________________________________________________________________

Detail: ______________________________________________________________________________________

Detail: ______________________________________________________________________________________

Detail: ______________________________________________________________________________________

Concluding Sentence: ________________________________________________________________________________

Transition Words and Phrases I Can Use: _______________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________
Topic Sentences and Detail Sentences

Purpose

To explore the role of a topic sentence in a paragraph and to show how the other sentences support it.

Now that you’ve taught the structure of a paragraph to your students, you can focus more attention on each of its parts, beginning with the topic sentence. A good topic sentence gives a writer ideas to explore and develop. Students who are working with a poorly defined topic sentence will find it difficult to write a well-developed paragraph. For example, if a paragraph begins with an overly general topic sentence, each detail may support the topic sentence without relating to one another at all.

Also, we as teachers must be aware of how we present topics to our students. Throwing out a direction such as “Write about George Washington” can be overwhelming because many students have difficulty settling on a logical starting point.

Launching Activity:

Topic Sentences and Detail Sentences (Overhead 3)

Before displaying the overhead, write the topic, hamburger, on the board. Then show students how to develop a question to create a topic sentence. Present a scenario like the following to your class: If someone said to me, “Write a paragraph about the hamburger,” I think I’d have a hard time deciding exactly what to write about. To help me make up my mind, I’d begin to think about what kinds of questions I have about hamburgers. For instance, I wonder how the hamburger got its name.” Then write the question How did the hamburger get its name? on the board. Elicit questions about the hamburger from students and write them on the board.

Then show the overhead to students. Point out the similarity between the question you wrote on the board and the title of the paragraph, and how the topic sentence indicates that the paragraph will answer your question. Allow time for students to rephrase one of the questions on the board to create a title and possible topic sentence, and discuss their work.
**Student Reproducible**

Getting Off to a Good Start: The two paragraphs on this reproducible will help students see how a vague topic sentence can make a writer wander all around a subject without giving the reader any substantive information. As students work, walk around the room to monitor their progress. Some pupils may find it difficult at first to articulate the reasons for choosing one paragraph over the other. To challenge students, ask them to provide exciting new titles for the paragraphs.

**Writing Practice**

Find a few paragraphs that have compelling topic sentences. Write one paragraph on the board each day, but omit the topic sentence. After students read the paragraph, challenge them to supply the missing topic sentence. Ask volunteers to write their topic sentences on the board, and have them explain how they developed the sentences. Assist them in refining their sentences as necessary. You also may want to supply your own somewhat general topic sentence and ask students to guide you in making it stronger. Then compare the original topic sentences to the ones you and your class created, and discuss the differences.
Getting Off to a Good Start

Which paragraph is more powerful? Read both of them and decide. Explain your choice.

Making Stickers Is Easy

It’s easy to make your own stickers. You can use pictures from magazines or draw your own pictures to turn into stickers. You can make a mixture out of boiling water and gelatin and brush it on the back of the picture. Be careful! Make sure you have an adult with you! Or you can mix white glue and vinegar and use that as glue. You can also use fabric paint to draw a design on a mirror or a jar lid and let it dry. As you can see, there are many, many ways to make stickers yourself.

Quick, Easy, and Cheap Stickers

You can make your own stickers at home or school by following these instructions. Begin by cutting out pictures from magazines to turn into stickers or drawing and cutting out your own pictures. Next, mix together two parts of white glue with one part of white vinegar, and add a few drops of peppermint extract. Then brush the mixture on the back of your stickers. After they dry, lick the glue side (tastes like peppermint) and press on the stickers. In no time at all—and for very little money—you can make dozens of cool and unique stickers.

Title of the more powerful paragraph: __________________________

I think it is more powerful because: ____________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
Developing a Paragraph

**Purpose**

To establish how to develop a cohesive paragraph

Once students understand how to create a good topic sentence, you can show them how to develop a paragraph that flows and is cohesive. The secret to a well-developed paragraph is organization. As the previous lesson pointed out, a weak topic sentence encourages a writer to meander. Consequently, the body of the paragraph may not flow because the details aren’t linked.

When students write paragraphs, encourage them to refer to the following reproducibles: A Paragraph up Close and Personal (page 13), Outlining Your Paragraph (page 14), and How Is a Paragraph Like a Hamburger? (page 21) to organize their material.

**Launching Activity: Developing a Paragraph (Overhead 4)**

After sharing the information about developing a paragraph on the overhead, allow time for students to read “Help Wanted: Dogs, Please Apply” independently. Then go over the questions at the bottom of the overhead. You may want to start by modeling a partial response to the first question: After reading the paragraph, I realized that the first sentence isn’t the topic sentence. It’s too general and doesn’t tell what the paragraph is really about. And the rest of the sentences don’t support it. However, this first sentence does lead to or build up to the topic sentence.

Then elicit students’ reactions to the second sentence. Call on other students to read sentences that support the topic sentence. Then, as the class responds to the third question, cross out the irrelevant sentences in the paragraph. Challenge students to explain why these sentences are unnecessary. Finally, collaborate with students to compose a satisfying concluding sentence.

Answers: 1. Third sentence: Today, dogs are also trained to be rescue dogs or guide dogs for the blind. 2. Accept any sentence except for those shown in the answer for question 3. 3. Sixth sentence: Labrador retrievers can be either yellow or black. Seventh sentence: They’re often called Labs for short. Eleventh sentence: Not many people today breed bloodhounds for tracking anymore. 4. Sample answer: Whether a person wants a companion,
is looking for a rescue dog, or has special needs, there is most likely a dog that can be trained to do the job.

▲ Student Reproducibles
Building a Paragraph: In this reproducible, students create their own paragraphs by selecting a topic, details for the body, and a concluding sentence. Encourage students to rephrase and move the sentences as necessary to create a cohesive paragraph.

How Is a Paragraph Like a Hamburger?: Since many students are visual learners, this model may enable them to better visualize the parts of a paragraph. You may want to use this reproducible in conjunction with the overhead. This will give students an opportunity to familiarize themselves with it. Then distribute additional copies so students can keep them in their notebooks.

▲ Writing Practice
In the previous lesson, students brainstormed topics about the hamburger. Now ask them to research the topic and write a paragraph about it. Remind them to outline the paragraph. After completing their work, students can use the hamburger graphic organizer (page 21) to assess the development of the paragraph.

▲ Enriching the Lesson
“Help Wanted: Dogs, Please Apply” is an example of an expository paragraph that compares and contrasts information. To extend the lesson, draw a Venn diagram on the board. Have students supply a title for each circle and then help you fill in the diagram. For additional writing practice, ask students to write a paragraph comparing and contrasting summer and winter or spring and fall.
Building a Paragraph

Build a paragraph by choosing a topic sentence, at least three detail sentences for the body, and a concluding sentence. Circle your choices. Then write your paragraph on another sheet of paper. To make your paragraph flow, you may rewrite or reorder some of the sentences.

Possible Topic Sentence: (Choose one.)

- Americans seem to love watermelon.
- Some American towns are crazy about watermelon.
- What do Green River, Utah; Dilley, Texas; Luling, Texas; and Hope, Arkansas, have in common?
- Several American cities bill themselves as the “Watermelon Capital”—and they have the watermelons to prove it.

Possible Detail Sentences: (Choose at least three.)

- Hope, Arkansas, has produced watermelons that weigh more than 100 pounds.
- The water tower in Hope is in the shape of a watermelon.
- President Bill Clinton was born in Hope, Arkansas.
- Green River, Utah, sports a giant watermelon statue that is 25 feet long.
- The Utah watermelon statue even has a motor, but it’s broken, so the statue doesn’t move anymore.
- In Green River, the watermelon statue is hollow.
- Another town with a watermelon-shaped water tower is Luling, Texas.
- Every summer, Luling hosts the Watermelon Thump.
- Luling paints its oil pumps.
- The Watermelon Thump features a car rally and a watermelon-seed-spitting contest.
- Although about 15 million watermelons are harvested in Dilley, Texas, each year, its watermelon statue is only 5 feet long.
- Dilley’s watermelon statue is in the city park.
- The watermelon harvest in Dilley begins in June.
- The slogan of Dilley is “Self-Proclaimed Watermelon Capital of Texas.”

Possible Concluding Sentence: (Choose one.)

- Lincoln, Illinois, named after Abraham Lincoln, also has a watermelon monument.
- Visitors to Bald Knob, Arkansas, may see a giant watermelon statue on the back of a roadside truck.
- There may not be one “Watermelon Capital,” but many towns enjoy celebrating this sweet and juicy fruit.
- To truly represent itself as the “Watermelon Capital,” a town has to build a watermelon statue or monument.
How Is a Paragraph Like a Hamburger?

Think of the top bun as the topic sentence, the meat and vegetables as the details that form the body, and the bottom bun as the concluding sentence. Use this graphic organizer to help you develop a powerful paragraph.

Topic Sentence

Detail

Detail

Detail

Concluding Sentence
Transitions

**Purpose**

To demonstrate how transitional words and phrases link the sentences in a paragraph.

Although students may understand how to develop a paragraph, their paragraphs may read and sound more like a list of sentences rather than a cohesive group of sentences. Their paragraphs often are missing transitional words and phrases that help the sentences flow more naturally from one idea to another. Many students often confuse transitions; for instance, they might use a transition word to emphasize an idea when they mean to conclude or summarize. And in their enthusiasm, it can be common for students to overuse transitional words. With some gentle encouragement and guidance on your part, young writers can recognize how to use transitions more economically and effectively.

**Launching Activity: Transitions (Overhead 5)**

After sharing the information about transitions on the overhead, ask students if they can identify transition words and phrases in “Marbles on the Move.” Record the transition words on the board, and then see if students can identify the type of each transition. Distribute the reproducible A Handy List of Transition Words and Phrases so students can check their answers. Allow time for them to point out any transitions they might have missed.

Then work with students to create a coherent and logical paragraph from the sentences at the bottom of the overhead. To get them started, read aloud the sentences, and ask students what the paragraph would be about. You may want to model your own response: I think we could transform these sentences into a strong paragraph about how to make lemonade. The sentences seem to be arranged in a logical order, so all we need to do is add transitions to make them flow together.

Allow time for students to look over the completed paragraph. Also read aloud the paragraph so they can hear how it sounds. This will give students the opportunity to evaluate their work and make any changes.

**Student Reproducibles**

A Handy List of Transition Words and Phrases: Distribute a copy to each student to store in his or her notebook as an easy reference. You may want to select a few brief paragraphs that include transitional words for the class.
to study and keep as samples. Also, urge students to look out for transitional words when they read and to add them to the list.

Lost in Transition: Make sure students have their list of transition words and phrases handy. Before they begin to write the paragraph, encourage them to think about its purpose. Will it explain how to do something? Will it be comparing or contrasting information? Will it be presenting a sequence of events?

**Writing Practice**

Create a series of how-to topics for simple, everyday tasks, such as tying a shoe, brushing one’s teeth, setting a table, directions to the classroom from the school’s front entrance, and so on. Let each student choose a topic, or make up an appropriate topic, and then write a short, expository paragraph describing the steps in the process. Emphasize the importance of transitional words, and point out that a paragraph may contain more than one type of transitional word. Ask pairs of students to exchange paragraphs and critique their effectiveness. Did each writer make good use of transitions?
### A Handy List of Transition Words and Phrases

This chart shows some of the variety of transition words and phrases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To Show Time</th>
<th>To Show Location</th>
<th>To Compare</th>
<th>To Contrast</th>
<th>To Add Information</th>
<th>To Emphasize an Idea</th>
<th>To Conclude or Summarize</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>about</td>
<td>above</td>
<td>also</td>
<td>although</td>
<td>additionally</td>
<td>again</td>
<td>accordingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>during</td>
<td>around</td>
<td>at</td>
<td>conversely</td>
<td>and</td>
<td>another</td>
<td>all in all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meanwhile</td>
<td>beside</td>
<td>in the same way</td>
<td>however</td>
<td>finally</td>
<td>for example</td>
<td>as a result</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>third</td>
<td>in front of</td>
<td>like</td>
<td>on the contrary</td>
<td>in addition</td>
<td>likewise</td>
<td>consequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>until</td>
<td>on top of</td>
<td>similarly</td>
<td>otherwise</td>
<td>next</td>
<td>together with</td>
<td>in conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>immediately</td>
<td>between</td>
<td></td>
<td>on the other hand</td>
<td>for example</td>
<td>moreover</td>
<td>therefore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>second</td>
<td>inside</td>
<td></td>
<td>yet</td>
<td>for instance</td>
<td>in addition</td>
<td>to sum up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>today</td>
<td>into</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>in addition</td>
<td>next</td>
<td>consequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tomorrow</td>
<td>near</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>next</td>
<td>next</td>
<td>in conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>then</td>
<td>near</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>in conclusion</td>
<td>in summary</td>
<td>therefore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>later</td>
<td>of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>therefore</td>
<td>in summary</td>
<td>to sum up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>until</td>
<td>off</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to sum up</td>
<td>thus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yesterday</td>
<td>under</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lost in Transition

Turn the information below into a paragraph. Think about how to use transition words to link the ideas. Write your paragraph on the lines below and feel free to rewrite the tips.

Lost in the Wild

Have you ever thought about what might happen if you got lost in the desert, mountains, or forest? Here are some tips.

• Tell someone where you are going.
• Carry a map and a compass. Know how to use them.
• Carry a backpack with a first-aid kit, extra food and clothing, sunglasses, and a flashlight.
• Wear a whistle around your neck. Blow it three times if you get lost.
• You may have to start a fire. You’ll need matches (waterproof) or a lighter.
• Think you’re lost? Don’t keep walking. This might make it more difficult for rescuers to find you.
• Stay calm. Don’t panic. It could cause you to become confused.
• Wait for help. Eat a meal. Set up your tent.
• Remember that people will be looking for you.

_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
During their school years, students are exposed to expository paragraphs more than any other type of paragraph. Their textbooks are filled with expository paragraphs that present information in a factual manner. As students encounter more varieties of printed material, they’ll need to have the skills to recognize how that material is being presented. For instance, is the author setting forth facts or opinions? To become effective writers, students must be able understand their goals in writing and to identify their audience.

**Launching Activity: Expository Paragraphs (Overhead 6)**

After reading aloud “Is There Enough Pizza for Leftovers?” to students, have them point out the facts in the paragraph. Then ask if they spot any opinions or personal information that the author may have included. Explain that the paragraph is an example of an expository paragraph because it “exposes” information about the topic of record-breaking pizzas in the United States. (Note that the paragraph is not strictly compare-contrast or problem-solution but a combination.)

Then share the information about expository paragraphs on the overhead. To illustrate examples of the different types of expository paragraphs, you can refer to the following pages: sequence—“Quick, Easy, and Cheap Stickers,” page 17; cause and effect—“How the Hamburger Got Its Name,” overhead 3; compare and contrast—“Help Wanted: Dogs, Please Apply,” overhead 4; and problem and solution—“The Midnight Ride of Sybil Luddington,” page 13.

Work through the exercises at the bottom of the overhead with students. Make sure they understand that exercise 2 is not part of an expository paragraph; neither the title nor the first sentence contain any facts. On the other hand, 1 and 3 are clearly factual. At this point, you may want to share and discuss the information in Enriching the Lesson with students.

**Student Reproducibles**

Keep a store of these reproducibles in a writing center so students can have easy access to the graphic organizers.
Sequence: Remind students that sequencing can involve the timing of events or following steps.

Cause and Effect: To help differentiate between cause and effect, students can use the following questions: What happened? (effect) and Why did it happen? (cause)

Compare and Contrast: Emphasize that similarities are written in the overlapping sections of the two circles.

Problem and Solution: Make sure students understand that a problem may have more than one solution, or that it may take several attempts to reach a solution. The result is what occurs when the problem is finally resolved.

Writing Practice
Assign one of the topics at the top of the Expository Paragraphs overhead: how to make a pizza, the history of pizza in the United States, Italian pizza versus American pizza, or the largest pizza ever made. Encourage students to use the graphic organizers on pages 28–31 to help them organize information. After students are satisfied with their work, share the paragraphs during a pizza party. They’ll have a new appreciation for pizza—and for expository paragraphs.

Enriching the Lesson
Have your students noticed that the expository paragraphs in this book are written in the third person? Because expository paragraphs are factual, the third-person voice lends more objectivity to the writing. Using the first-person voice in an expository paragraph may focus unwarranted attention on the writer, distract the reader from the topic, and lead to wordiness. Explain to students that the point of view of the author is implied by the topic and facts of an expository paragraph. Tell students that they’ll be studying other types of paragraphs—narrative, descriptive, and persuasive—where the first-person point of view may be essential to the understanding of the writing.
Sequence

Expository paragraphs sometimes explain a sequence of events, for example, the biography of Geronimo. In expository paragraphs that tell how to do something, the sequence of steps is important. You can use this chart to help you organize the sequence of events or steps to include in an expository paragraph.

1

2

3

4
# Cause and Effect

An expository paragraph can explain what happened (effect) and why it happened (cause). You can use this chart to help you organize the causes and effects to include in an expository paragraph.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Compare and Contrast

An expository paragraph can show how people, places, or things are similar and different. You can use a Venn diagram to organize the similarities and differences to include in an expository paragraph.
Problem and Solution

An expository paragraph can focus on a problem and how it was solved. You can use this chart to help you organize problems and solutions to include in an expository paragraph.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem(s)</th>
<th>Solution(s)</th>
<th>Result(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Overhead Writing Lessons: Powerful Paragraphs © Carol Rawlings Miller & Sarah Glasscock, Scholastic Teaching Resources 31
Narrative Paragraphs

Purpose

To introduce the narrative paragraph and distinguish it from the expository paragraph

So far in the book, students have been exposed to examples of expository paragraphs. Now it’s time to turn their attention to other types of paragraphs, beginning with the narrative paragraph. When students narrate personal experiences, they often slip into a stream-of-consciousness mode. Instead of producing a well-structured narrative, their writing meanders. By introducing the distinct elements of narrative paragraphs and also re-emphasizing that all paragraphs have the same structure, you’ll give your students a solid framework expressing themselves.

Launching Activity: Narrative Paragraphs (Overhead 7)

Before beginning this activity, look for examples of narrative paragraphs told from the third-person point of view. For instance, many textbooks have sections that rely on narrative paragraphs rather than expository paragraphs to engage students’ interest. It’s important to stress to students that narrative paragraphs are more than first-person accounts.

Share the elements of the narrative paragraph given on the overhead. Then ask a volunteer to read aloud “My Weekend With Andrew.” After a brief, general discussion about the paragraph, ask students to read the paragraph independently and then answer the questions at the bottom of the overhead with them. Here is an example of how you might guide responses to the first question: Who do you think is telling this story? Do any clues indicate how old this person might be? Do you know whether a male or a female is telling the story? Students should realize that the narrator could be about their age because he or she can’t get a pet without parental permission.

Sample responses:
2. Idea: The narrator realizes that the reality of taking care of a dog is a bigger job than he or she thought it would be.
3. Conflict: The narrator has to prove that he or she is responsible enough to take care of a pet.
4. Summary: The narrator wants to own a pet, but his or her parents say no. After proving that he or she is responsible by successfully dog sitting, the parents say the narrator can have a dog.

Challenge:
3. Who do you think is telling the story? Do any clues indicate how old this person might be? Do you know whether a male or a female is telling the story? Students should realize that the narrator could be about their age because he or she can’t get a pet without parental permission.

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Who do you think is telling this story? Do any clues indicate how old this person might be? Do you know whether a male or a female is telling the story? Students should realize that the narrator could be about their age because he or she can’t get a pet without parental permission.
▲ Student Reproducible
Getting Ready to Write a Narrative Paragraph: Go over each element in the graphic organizer. Explain to students that they may not need to have dialogue for each event. To familiarize students with the reproducible, have them use it to break down the paragraph “My Weekend With Andrew” from the overhead. Distribute several copies of the reproducible for them to keep in their notebooks, and place extra copies in the writing center. Students also will use the reproducible to help them complete the Writing Practice activity.

▲ Writing Practice
Challenge students to think of a personal experience they could translate into a narrative paragraph. Remind them that the experience must make a point instead of merely relating a sequence of events. Have students begin by filling out the Getting Ready to Write a Narrative Paragraph reproducible on page 34. Stress that they may have to discard several experiences before they settle on one that effectively conveys an idea, and tell them they shouldn’t get discouraged. Be on hand to consult with students and help them shape their narratives as needed.
# Getting Ready to Write a Narrative Paragraph

When you write a narrative paragraph, you’re telling a story. You can use this chart to help you organize your thoughts before you write.

| The Idea: ______________________________________________________________________ |
| The Conflict: ____________________________________________________________________ |

## Sequence of Events

| 1. ______________________________________________ | Details: __________________________________________ |
| 2. ______________________________________________ | Details: __________________________________________ |
| 3. ______________________________________________ | Details: __________________________________________ |
| 4. ______________________________________________ | Details: __________________________________________ |

---

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To introduce the descriptive paragraph and show how it appeals to the senses.

Now that students have a good grasp of expository and narrative paragraphs, it’s time to approach descriptive paragraphs. Students have learned that every paragraph has the same structure, and they’re beginning to see how they can use the different types of paragraphs to reach different audiences. Learning to write good descriptive paragraphs will sharpen their senses and broaden their vocabulary.

Launching Activity: Descriptive Paragraphs (Overhead 8)

Have students close their eyes and listen as you read aloud the descriptive paragraph by Stephen King on the overhead. Then ask them to tell you about what they experienced as you read. Did they picture the attic? Did they hear the “whoosh of the furnace” and the “patter of rats”? What kind of feeling did the paragraph give them? Then write the five senses on the board: Sight, Sound, Smell, Taste, and Touch. Discuss King’s paragraph in terms of its sensory details; let students suggest details to list under the senses.

As you share the information about descriptive paragraphs on the overhead, give examples of types of descriptive paragraphs—memoirs or autobiographies such as King’s, novels, and short stories. Like narrative writing, descriptive writing is often explained as “showing instead of telling.” The reader is swept up in the events and details of the writing. The writer creates a mood, or feeling, through words.

Then turn to the exercise at the bottom of the page. You may want to record students’ responses in a sensory list or a sensory word web (see page 37). Begin the exercise by contributing one or two details, such as the following for a slice of watermelon: When I shut my eyes and think of a slice of watermelon, I immediately see its deep pink color and its black seeds. Then I think about how sweet and refreshing watermelon tastes on a hot summer day.

As students volunteer more sensory details, add them to the list or word web. Work on the second topic as a class, too, but let students tackle the third topic by themselves. Point out that, for some topics, they might not be able to think of details for all five senses.
**Student Reproducible**

Make extra copies of the Sensory Web reproducible for students to keep in their notebooks. Also store a few copies in your writing center.

To introduce the web, ask students to use it to describe the classroom. Divide the class into two groups. While one group is working on the reproducible, continue working with the other group. This will enable students to observe and experience the classroom in action so they can gather more sensory details.

**Writing Practice**

Challenge students to write a descriptive paragraph about their classroom. Remind them to use their completed Sensory Web reproducible as a guide. They will still need to structure their paragraphs to include a title, a strong topic sentence, descriptive detail sentences, and a good concluding sentence. And in this case, their paragraphs should also convey a mood. Set aside time for students to share their writing. It will be enlightening for them—and you—to see the many diverse perspectives on the same room.

**Enriching the Lesson**

Take the exploration of descriptive paragraphs a step further by making a comparative study of the opening paragraphs of two novels or stories. Do the paragraphs give readers a sense of the problems or conflicts the characters will face? What kind of mood do these first paragraphs evoke? This will get students thinking about how an opening paragraph relates to the work as a whole, and the similarities and differences between the works can lead to a discussion of style. Carol has used *Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbitt and *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor with great success in her classroom. Each book begins on a hot day in the late summer, but the setting and the problems of the main characters are clearly different.
Sensory Web

A descriptive paragraph uses sensory details to paint a picture of a person, place, or thing. You can use a sensory word web to help you organize those details.

- **Topic**
- **Sights**
- **Sounds**
- **Textures**
- **Tastes**
- **Smells**
Persuasive Paragraphs

**Purpose**

To introduce the elements of a persuasive paragraph

After exploring how to incorporate their own responses and experiences through writing descriptive and narrative paragraphs, students now tackle persuasive paragraphs. They must learn to be rigorous in differentiating between facts and opinions. Like expository paragraphs, persuasive paragraphs involve researching facts. But in order to persuade readers to adopt a viewpoint, students have to go beyond the mere presentation of facts. They must also anticipate that some facts may not support their main statement and figure out how to address those arguments persuasively.

**Launching Activity: Persuasive Paragraphs (Overhead 9)**

Quickly review the different types of paragraphs that students have studied so far: expository, descriptive, and narrative. Explain that they will now be learning about persuasive paragraphs, which, like expository paragraphs, are also research-based. The goal in writing a persuasive paragraph is to persuade someone to accept your views on a topic. Emphasize to students that they must rely on facts and not opinions to sway their readers. Have them define the difference between facts and opinions and give examples of each. Then share the information about persuasive paragraphs on the overhead.

Before reading aloud “Think Before You Throw,” conduct a survey. Ask: Do you think recycling aluminum cans is a good idea? Then read and discuss the paragraph. Do students detect any opinions in the paragraph? What facts are presented? List these on the board. Did the writer do a persuasive job? Find out if the paragraph made any students change their minds about recycling.

Then answer the question at the bottom of the overhead. Students should recognize that sentences 1, 3, and 5 are facts that support the statement; that sentences 2 and 4 are opinions; and that sentence 6 is a fact that does not support the statement.

Students may struggle with the idea that a fact may not agree with their position. They may be tempted to discard it instead of using the fact as the basis for an argument. Model for students how you might counter sentence 6 in a persuasive paragraph: The argument in sentence 6 is that state offices are closed on holidays and that no work gets done. I know that some state holidays are optional, so offices can decide whether or not to close. Cesar Chavez
Day on March 31 is an optional holiday. I also know that some state offices are open and have a reduced staff on certain holidays, such as Lyndon Baines Johnson Day, celebrated on August 27. I would argue that Lance Armstrong Day could be an optional holiday or a reduced-staff holiday.

**Student Reproducible**

Facts and More Facts: Distribute several copies of this reproducible for students to keep in their notebooks. Also place extra copies in the writing center. In order to familiarize students with the reproducible, ask them to write a brief persuasive paragraph supporting Lance Armstrong Day as a Texas holiday. Have them use the sentences at the bottom of the overhead, and encourage them to research more facts to include.

**Writing Practice**

Extend the idea for the persuasive paragraph at the bottom of the overhead. Have students select a person to honor with a state or national holiday. This person may be famous or known only to the student. You may want to enlist the aid of the school or public librarian to help students undertake their research. Also make sure they’re armed with the reproducible on page 40. After students complete their paragraphs, hold a conference with each one. Constructively point out any opinions that have crept into their work or any unnecessary or unsubstantiated facts. Then let students read one another’s work and vote on the person they think is most deserving of a holiday.
Facts and More Facts

When you write a persuasive paragraph, rely on facts to convince your readers. Use this chart to help you organize your material.

My Statement: ____________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facts That Support My Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facts That Do Not Support My Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What Arguments Can I Make Against These Facts?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Arguments Can I Make Against These Facts?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Editing and Proofreading Paragraphs

**Purpose**
To emphasize the importance of editing and proofreading one’s own work, students are often surprised to find that they haven’t successfully translated the ideas in their heads onto the page. It can often be hard for them to see exactly what they’ve written. Going back to a piece of writing after several days helps sharpen their vision, as does allowing another student or the teacher to comment on their work. By understanding the different parts of a paragraph and how each is developed, students have built a strong foundation for their writing. But the final steps in any kind of writing are editing and proofreading.

▲ *Launching Activity: Editing and Proofreading Paragraphs (Overhead 10)*

Since you’ll be working with students on editing and proofreading “A Very Bad Move” from Overhead 10, you may want to make a photocopy of the paragraph for each student to mark. Otherwise, you can make the changes directly on the overhead, or call up volunteers to do so.

After reading aloud “A Very Bad Move,” go over the questions pages 47–48 at the bottom of the overhead with students. (Study the sample marked paragraph and revised paragraph in the answer key on page TK for guidance in answering questions 6 and 7.) Students should recognize that the paragraph is expository because it presents facts about a subject. The first sentence is the topic sentence: *One of the most interesting stories about the beloved American sport of baseball involves a curse.* For question 3, students may point out some of the following facts: The Boston Red Sox won the first World Series in 1903. The Red Sox traded Babe Ruth and other players to the Yankees in 1919. The Red Sox didn’t win another World Series after trading Ruth until 2004. Although the concluding sentence is linked to the topic sentence, it doesn’t have as much of an impact as it could. As for flow, transition words do help the sentences flow, but they could be smoother.

**Overhead Transparency**

- Editing and Proofreading Paragraphs
- Reproducibles
  - Paragraph Checklist
  - Proofreading Marks
  - Proofreading Practice, Please!

**Paragraph Checklist**

- Uses strategies to edit and publish written work
- Uses strategies to draft and revise written work
- Evaluates own and others’ writing

**National Language Arts Standards:**

- Drafts and revises written work
- Uses strategies to draft and revise written work
- Evaluates own and others’ writing

**Practice, Please!**

1. Are there any sentences that don’t seem to belong in the paragraph? Are there any sentences that seem repetitive?
2. Can you find any spelling and grammatical errors?
3. Have you ever gotten a paper back from a friend or a teacher where the margins were filled with questions and marks? Were you surprised by their comments? Did you find the comments helpful?
4. Is there a concluding sentence? Does it satisfy you as a reader?
5. Does the paragraph flow easily? Transition words help with flow, but sometimes sentences are hard to follow. Do the words flow easily from sentence to sentence?
6. To emphasize the importance of editing and proofreading one’s own work, students are often surprised to find that they haven’t successfully translated the ideas in their heads onto the page. It can often be hard for them to see exactly what they’ve written. Going back to a piece of writing after several days helps sharpen their vision, as does allowing another student or the teacher to comment on their work. By understanding the different parts of a paragraph and how each is developed, students have built a strong foundation for their writing. But the final steps in any kind of writing are editing and proofreading.

**Arts Standards:**

- Drafts and revises written work
- Uses strategies to draft and revise written work
- Evaluates own and others’ writing
**Student Reproducibles**  
Distribute copies of the reproducibles Paragraph Checklist and Proofreading Marks for students to keep in their notebooks. Store extra copies in the writing center. Have students use the Proofreading Marks reproducible to proof Proofreading Practice, Please!

**Writing Practice**  
Challenge students to revise “A Very Bad Move.” Also ask them to use the Paragraph Checklist and Proofreading Marks reproducibles to edit another paragraph they have written. Discuss how using the reproducibles affected their view of the work.

**Enriching the Lesson**  
Asking students to edit and proofread someone else’s work can help with their own writing. Emphasize the importance of clearly articulating their questions and concerns. By doing so, students can begin to approach their own work with a clearer eye.
Paragraph Checklist

All Paragraphs:
- Is the paragraph indented?
- Is the topic sentence clear?
- Are there at least three detail sentences in the body of the paragraph to support the topic sentence?
- Have I used transition words to help the sentences flow?
- Does the paragraph contain any unnecessary words or sentences?
- Does the concluding sentence wrap up the paragraph and link to the topic sentence?

Expository Paragraphs:
- Does the paragraph present information about a topic?
- Have I researched the topic well enough?
- Does the paragraph contain at least three facts that support the topic sentence?
- Are the facts presented in a logical order?

Descriptive Paragraphs:
- Does the paragraph paint a clear picture of a person, place, or thing?
- Have I used expressive language?
- Have I included sensory details that will help the reader picture the topic?

Narrative Paragraphs:
- Does the paragraph tell a story or relate an experience?
- Does the paragraph make an important point?
- Is the material presented in sequence?

Persuasive Paragraphs:
- Does the paragraph begin with a statement that I want to prove?
- Have I researched the statement well enough?
- Does the paragraph contain at least three facts that support the statement?
- Have I used only facts, not opinions, to prove my point?

Grammar, Spelling, Capitalization, and Punctuation:
- Have I checked the grammar?
- Are all the words in the paragraph spelled correctly?
- Have I capitalized all proper nouns?
- Is the paragraph punctuated correctly?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>Proofreader’s Mark</th>
<th>Correction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>delete</td>
<td>the cold and freezing ice</td>
<td>the freezing ice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delete and close up space</td>
<td>the freezing ice</td>
<td>the freezing ice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insert word(s)</td>
<td>\text{i}n \text{Maine}</td>
<td>last winter in Maine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>let it stand</td>
<td>our \text{summer vacation}</td>
<td>our summer vacation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spell out</td>
<td>\text{\text{\text{bluebirds}}}</td>
<td>nine bluebirds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>new paragraph</td>
<td>“I did. \text{\text{\text{You did not.&quot;}}</td>
<td>“I did.” \text{\text{\text{You did not.&quot;}}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transpose</td>
<td>my \text{friend best}</td>
<td>my best friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insert space</td>
<td>Ring the doorbell.</td>
<td>Ring the doorbell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>close up space</td>
<td>Who \text{is it?}</td>
<td>Who is it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insert period</td>
<td>I am so tired</td>
<td>I am so tired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insert comma</td>
<td>coats, shoes and pants</td>
<td>coats, shoes, and pants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insert quotation marks</td>
<td>\text{Read the poem, Sand.}</td>
<td>\text{Read the poem, “Sand.”}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insert parentheses</td>
<td>\text{Read “Sand” (pages 10–12)}</td>
<td>\text{Read “Sand” (pages 10–12).}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uppercase</td>
<td>\text{\text{\text{Thanksgiving Day}}}</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lowercase</td>
<td>\text{\text{\text{my birthday}}}</td>
<td>my birthday</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Proofreading Practice, Please!

Snow White needs some proofreading help. Her letter contains 10 errors. Mark the errors using proofreading marks.

Dear Dwarfs,

You’re probably wondering why I left? I have to admit I have gotten tired of your strange habits. It’s no fun being with people who are sneezing, sleeping, and acting grumpy all day. Also, it turned out that the prince wasn’t the one for me. I don’t want to sit around the castle all day while he’s off slaying dragons. It’s so boring.

The other day, I took a good look in the mirror. Sure it said, “You’re the fairest of them all.” But it also said, “Plan for the future. Think about your education. Think about your career.” That was it. “Snow, I said, “it’s time to leave here. It’s time to say good-bye to the dwarfs. I’m going back to school.”

I hope I haven’t hurt your feelings. I appreciate how generous you’ve been, but I want to make it on my own.

Your friend,

Snow White
Answer Key

Page 9: What Am I?
1. expository
2. descriptive
3. narrative
4. persuasive

Page 10: Order! Order!
Possible answer:

With its hump and long legs, the camel may look funny, but it’s uniquely suited to living in the desert. Many people think that a camel’s hump is filled with water, but this isn’t true. The hump is a mound of fatty tissue that can shrink. If no food is available, a camel gets energy from this fatty tissue. A camel’s legs are long and thin, but they are very muscular. These muscles enable the animal to carry heavy loads for long distances.

For instance, a camel can carry almost 1,000 pounds, but a load of about 400 pounds is the best weight. A walking camel travels about 3 miles per hour. The typical distance a camel can travel in a day is 25 miles. At a gallop, racing camels can do 12 miles per hour.

When a camel walks, the pads of its feet spread. This keeps the camel’s feet from sinking into the sand. The lack of food in a desert and its soft, sandy surface are no problems for a camel!

Page 17: Getting Off to a Good Start

“Quick, Easy, and Cheap Stickers” is the more powerful paragraph because its topic sentence helps the writer focus on clearly presenting the steps in this how-to paragraph.

Page 20: Building a Paragraph (Sample answer is given.)

Several American cities bill themselves as the “Watermelon Capital”—and they have the watermelons to prove it. For instance, the water tower in Hope, Arkansas, is in the shape of a watermelon. Hope has produced watermelons that weigh more than 100 pounds. Green River, Utah, sports a giant watermelon statue that is 25 feet long. This Utah watermelon statue even has a motor, but it’s broken, so the statue doesn’t move anymore. Another town with a watermelon-shaped water tower is Luling, Texas. Every summer, Luling hosts the Watermelon Thump. The Watermelon Thump features a car rally and a watermelon-seed-spitting contest. Although about 15 million watermelons are harvested in Dilley, Texas, each year, their watermelon statue is only 5 feet long. The slogan of Dilley is “Self-Proclaimed Watermelon Capital of Texas.” There may not be one “Watermelon Capital,” but many towns enjoy celebrating this sweet and juicy fruit.
Lost in Transition (Sample answer is given.)

Lost in the Wild

Have you ever thought about what might happen if you got lost in the desert, mountains, or forest? If you follow these tips, the chances are good that you’ll be rescued quickly. First of all, always tell someone where you are going and what time you expect to return. Next, make sure you’re prepared for your trip into the wild by taking along important supplies and equipment. Carry a map and a compass—and make sure you know how to use them. Along with these pieces of equipment, carry a backpack filled with a first-aid kit, extra food and clothing, sunglasses, and a flashlight. Also, wear a whistle around your neck. If you get lost, then blow it three times. Furthermore, you may have to start a fire, so you’ll need matches (waterproof) or a lighter. Finally, if you think you’re lost, don’t keep walking. This might make it more difficult for rescuers to find you. Stay calm. Don’t panic because that could cause you to become confused. To repeat, wait for help. While you wait, eat a meal or set up your tent. Remember to keep this in mind: People will be looking for you. If you plan ahead, getting lost will not be a problem.

Facts and More Facts (Sample paragraph is given.)

A Day for a Champ

Native Texan Lance Armstrong deserves a state holiday. Born in Plano, Texas, Armstrong now lives in Austin, Texas. Armstrong is the only person to have won six consecutive Tour de France bicycle races in a row. And he achieved this feat after battling cancer. Texas celebrates other heroes, including Cesar Chavez and Lyndon Baines Johnson, with state holidays. On these holidays, state offices have the option of closing or remaining open with a reduced staff. Give Texans the opportunity to celebrate one of the state’s great champions and heroes by having a Lance Armstrong state holiday.

Overhead 10: Editing and Proofreading Paragraphs

A Very Bad Move

One of the most interesting stories about the beloved sport of baseball involves a curse. In 1919, the team’s owner, Harry Frazee, a total moron, arranged to trade Babe Ruth to the New York Yankees. What was the reason for the trade? Legend has it that Frazee wanted the money to finance the musical, “No, No, Nanette.” The musical was a pet project of his wife’s. Compared to baseball, musicals are a waste of time. Actually, “No, No, Nanette” didn’t open on Broadway until 1925. Because of the trade, the Red Sox and the Yankees remain bitter rivals to this day. Frazee traded Ruth and other players such as Sad Sam Jones because he lost so much money on other shows. In fact, Yankees’ fans will occasionally taunt Red Sox players by chanting, “No, No, Nanette.” You can imagine how much that annoys the players. But what probably annoys the Red Sox players even more is the fact that they didn’t win a World Series until 2004, decades after they lost Ruth and other players were traded. Although the Red Sox won the very first world series in 1903, some say that the baseball team was under the “Curse of the Bambino,” which was one of Babe Ruth’s nicknames.
A Very Bad Move

One of the most interesting stories about the beloved American sport of baseball involves a curse. In 1919, the owner of the Boston Red Sox, Harry Frazee, arranged to trade Babe Ruth to the New York Yankees. What was the reason for the trade? Legend has it that Frazee wanted the money to finance the musical “No, No, Nanette,” which was a pet project of his wife’s. Actually, “No, No, Nanette” didn’t open on Broadway until 1925. Frazee traded Ruth and other players such as Sad Sam Jones because he lost so much money on other shows. Because of the trade, the Red Sox and the Yankees remain bitter rivals to this day. In fact, the Yankees’ fans will occasionally taunt Red Sox players by chanting, “No, No, Nanette.” That may be annoying, but what really annoyed the Red Sox players and fans is the fact that they didn’t win a World Series until 2004, decades after Ruth and other players were traded. As a result, some believe that the baseball team suffered from the “Curse of the Bambino,” which was one of Babe Ruth's nicknames.

Dear Dwarfs,

You’re probably wondering why I left. I have to admit I have gotten tired of your strange habits. It’s no fun being with people who are sneezing, sleeping, and acting grumpy all day. Also, it turned out that the prince wasn’t the one for me. I don’t want to sit around the castle all day while he’s off slaying dragons. It’s so boring.

The other day, I took a good look in the mirror. Sure it said, “You’re the fairest of them all.” But it also said, “Plan for the future. Think about your education. Think about your career.” That was it. “Snow, I said, “it’s time to leave here. It’s time to say good-bye to the dwarfs. I’m going back to school.”

I hope I haven’t hurt your feelings. I appreciate how generous you’ve been, but I want to make it on my own.

Your friend,

Snow White
A powerful paragraph immediately captures a reader’s attention—and holds it until the last sentence. To create a powerful paragraph, a writer includes a variety of sentences. The sentences vary in length and in the use of words.

The U.S. Army Camel Corps

Almost everybody laughed at George Crosman when he suggested using camels as pack animals in the southwestern United States. Crosman argued that camels could carry larger burdens and go longer without food or water than horses or mules. Plus, camels didn’t need shoes. Finally, Jefferson Davis, who was then Secretary of War, agreed to give the camels a try. On April 29, 1856, 34 camels arrived by ship in Indianola, Texas, to join the U.S. Army.

The Camel Corps proved themselves in 1857. A group of 44 soldiers, 25 camels, and 2 camel drovers set out to explore territory between El Paso and the Colorado River. When the soldiers became lost and ran low on water, the camels found a river 20 miles away. They then led the soldiers to the water and saved the expedition.

Unfortunately, not everyone thought the experiment was a success. Some soldiers claimed the camels smelled, kicked, and spit. Then the Civil War began, and the camels were sold. For many years, the camels were seen wandering in the southwestern United States.

A paragraph is a group of sentences that shares one main idea.

▲ The first sentence of a paragraph is always indented.
▲ Each sentence in a paragraph contributes to the main idea.

Which of the following sentences could you use to conclude the last paragraph of “The U.S. Army Camel Corps”? Explain your reasons.

1. Lieutenant David Dixon Porter and Major Henry C. Wayne searched for camels to buy in North Africa, Malta, Greece, Turkey, and Egypt.

2. One-humped Arabians are the best camels to ride, while two-humped Bactrians are better for carrying loads.

3. Some people swear they still see camels roaming the region.

4. To show the animals’ strength, Major Wayne would load four bales of hay weighing more than 1,200 pounds on one camel.
The Midnight Ride of Sybil Luddington

Like Paul Revere, sixteen-year-old Sybil Luddington saved the day by taking a midnight ride during the American Revolution. On April 26, 1777, the British attacked Danbury, Connecticut. They began to burn the Americans’ houses and possessions. Soon, the British would find and destroy the American militia’s weapons stored in the town. Many of the colonial militia in the area were farmers. They were at home because it was planting season. A messenger rode to the house of Henry Luddington with the news. Luddington decided to call the militia to meet at his house by morning. When the messenger said he and his horse were too tired to ride and tell everyone in the countryside, Sybil Luddington volunteered to go. In the darkness of night, she rode for more than 40 miles on mostly unfamiliar roads, stopping only long enough to bang on shutters and shout her message. By the next morning, nearly all of the colonial militia had gathered at the Luddingtons’ house. Soon they were on the march. Thanks to Sybil Luddington, the British were driven out of Danbury.

After you read the paragraph, discuss these questions.

▲ What was this paragraph about?

▲ What kind of details did the writer include to interest you in this subject?

▲ How did the writer show the passage of time?

▲ Do the opening and closing sentences have anything in common?

▲ How would you briefly summarize this paragraph?

▲ Does this paragraph make you want to learn more about Sybil Luddington or other events in the American Revolution?
A strong topic sentence gets your paragraph off to a great start, but sometimes you have to narrow down the topic.

**Topic: The Hamburger**

↓

A Question I Have About the Hamburger:

How did the hamburger get its name?

↓

**Paragraph**

**How the Hamburger Got Its Name**

It’s unclear who actually cooked the first hamburger, but the origins of the sandwich’s name can be traced. Mongolian tribes led by Genghis Khan shredded and ate beef from poor-quality cows because it was easier to digest. After being invaded by the Mongolians, Russians began eating ground meat, too. Then German ships visiting Russian ports discovered the delicacy. Soon, cooked ground meat became known as “Hamburg steak” after the German city of Hamburg. German immigrants introduced the Hamburg steak to America. Someone—it may have been Charlie Nagreen of Seymour, Wisconsin; Fletcher Davis of Athens, Texas; Charles and Franck Menches of Hamburg, New York; or Louis Lassen of New Haven, Connecticut—turned the Hamburg steak into a sandwich by placing it between two slices of bread. The hamburger was born.

*A topic sentence tells what the paragraph will be about.*

▲ The topic sentence appears at or near the beginning of the paragraph.

▲ A good topic sentence—and title—spark a reader’s interest.

▲ Detail sentences support the topic sentence.

What kinds of questions do you have about the hamburger? How can you turn your question into a title and a topic sentence?

Question: __________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

Title: __________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

Possible Topic Sentence: __________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________
Developing a Paragraph

Think of the topic sentence, the body, and the concluding sentence as the beginning, middle, and ending of a paragraph.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Sentence</th>
<th>Body</th>
<th>Concluding Sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beginning</strong></td>
<td><strong>Middle</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ending</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To develop a powerful paragraph, start with a strong topic sentence, build on it with interesting and relevant details, and tie it up with a concluding sentence.

Help Wanted: Dogs, Please Apply

For thousands of years, dogs have been helping humans hunt and herd. As pets, they’ve served as faithful companions. Today, dogs are also trained to be rescue dogs or guide dogs for the blind. Both types of canine jobs take months of patient training, but the requirements for each job differ. The best breeds for guide dogs are purebred Labrador retrievers, German shepherds, golden retrievers, and a Labrador/golden retriever mix. Labrador retrievers can be either yellow or black. They’re often called Labs, for short. Guide dogs must be willing to work and to please their handlers, have a coat that’s easy to care for, and be a realistic size and weight. Trained to track by smell, rescue dogs often work in harsh terrain and weather conditions. Although Labrador retrievers, bloodhounds, Newfoundlands, German shepherds, and golden retrievers are popular breeds for rescue work, a dog’s breed isn’t as important as its attitude. Not many people today breed bloodhounds for tracking anymore. A rescue dog can be a medium or a large dog, and it must love to track and be able to focus on following a scent.

The **topic sentence** tells what the paragraph will be about.

The **body** contains sentences that support the topic sentence.

The **concluding sentence** wraps up the paragraph.

> A topic sentence is not always the first sentence of a paragraph.
> The sentences in the body should relate to one another. They should also be written in logical order.
> A good concluding sentence ties into the topic sentence and wraps up the paragraph.

**After reading the paragraph above, answer these questions.**

1. What is the topic sentence?
2. Identify a sentence that gives details to support the topic sentence.
3. Which sentence or sentences in the body are unnecessary?
4. Suggest a concluding sentence for the paragraph.
Be sure to include transitions when you write a paragraph. These words supply clues that readers can follow to understand your thinking.

**Marbles on the Move**

As you’re knuckling down, have you ever wondered how the marble you’re about to shoot was made? Archaeologists have discovered ancient marbles all around the world. Baked clay, flint, and stone were used to create the earliest marbles. Some people believe that the Romans spread the game throughout their huge empire. On the other hand, Native American cultures had no contact with the Romans, yet they played with marbles made of fir balsam pitch or stones. Until about 1846, people made marbles out of stone—sometimes real marble—china, and glass. Then a glassblower in Germany invented a tool called marble scissors. His invention made it possible to quickly produce more marbles. As a result, more marbles meant more sales. Today, glass for marbles is melted in a hot furnace. To create designs, different colored glass is inserted into the melted glass. As the glass flows, shears cut it into small and even shapes. Finally, rollers cool the glass shapes and form them into balls. These glass marbles have become so popular because they are easy to manufacture. But most importantly, smooth and colorful glass marbles appeal to a player’s senses.

**Transitions**

Transitions are words that connect or link the sentences in a paragraph.

- Transitions can convey a sense of time.
- Transitions can show the sequence of events.
- Writers can use transitions to develop an argument.
- Writers can use transitions to order the importance of ideas.

Read the steps below. Use transitions to create a paragraph out of the sentences. Don’t forget to give the paragraph a title.

1. Squeeze lemons to obtain their juice.
2. Strain the seeds from the juice.
3. Pour the juice into a pitcher.
4. Add water to the pitcher.
5. Add sugar to the pitcher.
6. Stir until the sugar dissolves.
7. Add ice and pour into glasses.
Your teacher says, “Write a paragraph about one of these topics: how to make a pizza, the history of pizza in the United States, Italian pizza versus American pizza, or the largest pizza ever made. And stick to the facts, please.” No matter which topic you choose, you’ll be writing an expository paragraph.

Is There Enough Pizza for Leftovers?

The United States has had its share of huge pizzas. The largest pizza in the United States was created in Havana, Florida. It weighed 44,457 pounds—including 18,174 pounds of flour; 6,445 pounds of sauce; 9,375 pounds of cheese; and 2,387 pounds of pepperoni! After being cut into 94,248 slices, the pizza was served to more than 30,000 people. In Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, people can buy their own record-breaking pizza. This pizza measures 4 feet in diameter, which translates into 1,814 square inches of pie. It took several tries for the owners of the pizzeria to get the pie right. The first pizza stuck to the bottom of the pan, so they added cornmeal to the crust and changed the oven temperature. After about 20 minutes, a pizza with eight pounds of cheese, 64 ounces of sauce, and 170 ounces of dough comes out of the oven. (It has to be taken out of the oven by two people.) No matter how—or where—you slice it, that’s a lot of pizza!

An expository paragraph presents facts about a topic. There are different types of expository paragraphs.

- An expository paragraph can present information in sequence.
- An expository paragraph can show cause and effect.
- An expository paragraph can compare and contrast information.
- An expository paragraph can explain a problem and how it was solved.

Read the titles and first sentences of each paragraph below. Which paragraphs will be expository? How can you tell?

1. Title: “The Connection Between World War II and American Pizza”
   First sentence: During World War II in Italy, American soldiers ate their first pizzas.

2. Title: “Why I Don’t Like Mushrooms on My Pizza”
   First sentence: I never order mushrooms on my pizza because they make the crust soggy.

3. Title: “Tomatoes Make the Pizza”
   First sentence: The first tomatoes were brought to Europe from Peru and Ecuador in the 1500s, but Europeans believed they were poisonous.
Suppose you really want to own a dog. You promise to take care of it, but your parents have doubts. Then something happens to make everyone think differently. If you wrote about this experience, you’d be writing a narrative paragraph.

My Weekend With Andrew

I don’t know how many times I begged my parents to let me have a dog. You know the drill: I promised I would take good care of it. They said I needed to be more responsible. If I couldn’t remember to bring my homework home, then how could I remember to feed and walk a dog? Then something happened that changed all of our minds. My Aunt Grace asked me to dog-sit Andrew, her wire-haired terrier. I jumped at the chance. This would give me a chance to prove how responsible I could be. Early Saturday morning, Aunt Grace dropped off Andrew. She said he needed to be walked immediately—and for at least 30 minutes, rain or no rain. After putting on my slicker, we headed out. We were almost home when Andrew plopped down in a big puddle and refused to budge. When I reached down to scoop him up, he promptly rolled in the puddle until he was coated with a light batter of mud. Both Andrew and I had baths. Mine took about five minutes. His took about an hour. Most of that time was spent chasing Andrew as he ran through the house leaving a trail of soap bubbles. (Did I mention he hates to be bathed?) To make a long story short, Andrew had a great time. Aunt Grace told me what a wonderful job I’d done. My parents offered to take me to the animal shelter to look for a dog. I said, “Maybe we can go in a few months. Right now, I’m going to take a long nap.” Being responsible is exhausting.

A narrative paragraph tells a story.

A narrative paragraph makes and supports an important idea.

Like any good story, a narrative paragraph includes conflict.

The sequence of events are also presented in order.

A narrative paragraph contains expressive language, and it may also include dialogue.

After reading the narrative paragraph above, answer these questions.

1. Who do you think the narrator of this paragraph is?

2. What important idea does this narrative paragraph present?

3. What kind of conflict does the narrator experience?

4. How would you briefly summarize this narrative paragraph?

5. How does the writer use expressive language and dialogue?
By using vivid details, a writer can create “pictures” for their readers.

My room in our Durham house was upstairs, under the eaves. At night I could lie in bed beneath one of these eaves—if I sat up suddenly, I was apt to whack my head a good one—and read by the light of a gooseneck lamp that put an amusing boa constrictor of shadow on the ceiling. Sometimes the house was quiet except for the whoosh of the furnace and the patter of rats in the attic; sometimes my grandmother would spend an hour or so around midnight yelling for someone to check Dick—she was afraid he hadn’t been fed. Dick, a horse she’d had in her days as a schoolteacher, was at least forty years dead. I had a desk beneath the room’s other eave, my old Royal typewriter, and a hundred or so paperback books, mostly science fiction, which I lined up along the baseboard.

—From On Writing by Stephen King

A descriptive paragraph contains sensory details that show how someone or something looks, feels, tastes, sounds, or smells.

A writer may use the first-person or third-person voice in a descriptive paragraph.

Use your senses to help you brainstorm details about these topics.

1. a slice of watermelon
2. your town or city
3. yourself
Suppose you wanted to persuade people that recycling aluminum cans is important. After doing some research, you might write a persuasive paragraph like this.

Think Before You Throw

If you have an aluminum can to throw away, make sure you throw it in a recycling bin instead of a trash can. Why is recycling aluminum cans so important? Recycling an aluminum can takes 95 percent less energy than producing a new can. In the space of about 60 days, a discarded container can go from the recycling bin to a store shelf. And aluminum cans can be recycled over and over again. What’s good for the environment is also good for our paychecks. Every year, Americans earn nearly one billion dollars from recycling aluminum cans. Think about this the next time you’re watching television: By recycling one aluminum can, you can save enough energy to run your set for three hours. Recycling aluminum cans makes sense, and cents!

A persuasive paragraph presents a statement and then supports it with facts.

A writer uses a persuasive paragraph to try to persuade or convince the reader to accept a statement.

Before beginning to write a persuasive paragraph, a writer must do research to find facts that support the statement.

To make the strongest argument, a writer must also consider facts that do not support his or her statement.

The arguments in a persuasive paragraph must be based on facts, and not opinions.

The sentence below is the topic sentence of a persuasive paragraph.

The state of Texas should create a holiday to honor Lance Armstrong.

Which of the following sentences are facts that could be used to support this topic sentence?

1. Lance Armstrong is a native Texan who was born in Plano, Texas.
2. He is a great role model for kids.
3. Armstrong has won the Tour de France, a difficult bicycle race, six times.
4. A lot of people would be happy to have a day off to celebrate this hero.
5. The capital city of Austin has already held a Lance Armstrong Day.
6. No state work gets done on a Texas state holiday.
Have you ever gotten a paper back from a friend or a teacher where the margins were filled with questions and mistakes were circled? Were you surprised by their confusion? Carefully editing and proofreading your writing will cure this problem.

**A Very Bad Move**

One of the most interesting stories about the beloved American sport of baseball involves a curse. In 1919, the team’s owner, Harry Frazee, a total moron, arranged to trade Babe Ruth to the New York Yankees. What was the reason for the trade? Legend has it that Frazee wanted the money to finance the musical, “No, No, Nanette.” The musical was a pet project of his wife’s. Compared to baseball, musicals are a waste of time. Actually, “No, No, Nanette” didn’t open on Broadway until 1925. Because of the trade, the Red Socks and the Yankees remain bitter rivals to this day. Frazee traded Ruth and other such as Sad Sam Jones because he lost so much money on other shows. In fact, Yankees’ fans will occasionally taunt Red Socks’ players by chanting, “No, No, Nanette.” You can imagine how much that annoys the players. But what probably annoys the Red Socks players even more is the fact that they didn’t win a World Series until 2004, decades after Ruth and other players were traded. Although the Red Socks won the very first world series in 1903, some say that the baseball team was under the “Curse of the Bambino,” which was one of Babe Ruth’s nicknames.

**Edit a paragraph to make sure your ideas are presented clearly and logically.** **Proofread a paragraph to catch any grammatical or spelling errors.**

▲ Editing is an important part of the writing process. You may find yourself writing several drafts of a paragraph.

▲ Even if you work on a computer and use a spell checker, proofread your writing again. The spell checker won’t catch an error such as typing *tan* instead of *ran*.

**After reading “A Very Bad Move,” answer these questions.**

1. What type of paragraph is this?
2. What is the topic sentence?
3. Can you find at least three details that support the topic sentence?
4. Is there a concluding sentence? Does it satisfy you as a reader?
5. Do the sentences flow easily?
6. Are there any sentences that don’t seem to belong in the paragraph? Are there any sentences that seem to be out of order? Are there any sentences that seem repetitive?
7. Can you find any spelling and grammatical errors?