

Unit 2 & 4

Organizing Principles of Paragraphs

Style of Writing

What is a Paragraph?

- ▶ A paragraph is defined as “a group of sentences or a single sentence that forms a unit.” The unity and coherence of ideas among sentences is what constitutes a paragraph.
- ▶ Length and appearance do not determine whether a section in a document is a paragraph.
- ▶ Most paragraphs in any document have a three-part structure: introduction, body, and conclusion.
 - ▶ *Introduction*: the first section of a paragraph; should include the topic sentence and any other sentences at the beginning of the paragraph that give background information or provide a transition.
 - ▶ *Body*: follows the introduction; discusses the controlling idea, using facts, arguments, analysis, examples, or other information. Consists of supporting sentences.
 - ▶ *Conclusion*: the final section; summarizes the connections between the information discussed in the body of the paragraphs and the paragraph's controlling idea
- ▶ A well-organized paragraph supports or develops a single controlling idea, which is expressed in a sentence called the topic sentence.

Sample Paragraph...

Scientists have learned to supplement the sense of sight in numerous ways. In front of the tiny pupil of the eye they put, on Mount Palomar, a great monolete 200 inches in diameter, and with it see 2000 times farther into the depths of space. Or they look through a small pair of lenses arranged as a microscope into a drop of water or blood, and magnify by as much as 2000 diameters the living creatures there, many of which are among man's most dangerous enemies. Or, if we want to see distant happenings on earth, they use some of the previously wasted electromagnetic waves to carry television images which they re-create as light by whipping tiny crystals on a screen with electrons in a vacuum. Or they can bring happenings of long ago and far away as coloured motion pictures, by arranging silver atoms and colour-absorbing molecules to force light waves into the patterns of the original reality. Or if we want to see into the centre of a steel casting or the chest of an injured child, they send the information on a beam of penetrating shortwave X rays, and then convert it back into images we can see on a screen or photograph. **Thus almost every type of electromagnetic radiation yet discovered has been used to extend our sense of sight in some way.**

George Harrison, "Faith and the Scientist"

Principles for Organizing Paragraphs

- ▶ **Classification:** Break down your main message into smaller categories
 - ▶ **There are problems in applying this approach.** First, ability to pay is sometimes difficult to measure. Poverty can be transitory. For example, those in need of social care services may be in transitory poverty. Forcing them to pay could reduce their ability to get out of poverty. Second, some problems are catastrophic in nature. In such cases, the expenditure is great, so that having to pay out of pocket for services would push the non-poor into poverty.
- ▶ **Chronological:** After the topic sentence, begin with what happened first and take it from there. The topic sentence can be used to limit the chronological scope of the paragraph.
 - ▶ **Uganda's economic fortunes have varied considerably over the past 40 years according to its political situation.** After independence in 1962 and throughout the 1960s, Uganda showed great potential as one of the strongest economies in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, its performance was set back considerably during the subsequent periods of military rule (1971-79) and civil war (1980-85). Then, in 1987 the new National Resistance Movement (NRM) government under the leadership of President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni launched a recovery program to restore financial stability, create conditions for rapid and sustained growth and develop human capital. It also embarked on policy and institutional reform to deregulate the economy, eliminate direct state involvement in all but essential public services, and improve institutional efficiency. These efforts put Uganda on a path of recovery, but progress was slow through the early 1990s.

Principles for Organizing Paragraphs

- ▶ **Evidence and Illustration:** Support your topic sentence with examples.
 - ▶ **Evidence gathered in the field presents an uneven picture of collaboration and cooperation.** For example, Burkina Faso had very little collaboration between the WBI and country team on the provision of training. Mexico had some collaboration. Bangladesh had extensive and fruitful cooperation and collaboration. Differences in the extent of collaboration and cooperation could be traced to different management practices of WBI Regional Coordinators
- ▶ **Contrast and Comparison:** Demonstrate similarities or differences between two or more people or things.
 - ▶ **Previously, program beneficiaries were chosen by funders; now the process is improved because beneficiaries are chosen in consultation with the community.** In previous years, when the programs were smaller, the funders usually chose program beneficiaries. Local governments would undergo an application process for funding. Now, in selecting the program beneficiaries, criteria are decided jointly with the community leaders in the selected area. For a program to be sustainable, the affected or concerned community should be involved in the project from the design phase onwards. The community should be the decision maker in terms of who can participate in the program. This enhanced ownership can ensure fair distribution of benefits, minimize intra-community conflict over who participates, and thus render programs more sustainable.

Principles for Organizing Paragraphs

- ▶ **Cause and Effect:** Make a statement and then show what the effects of that statement would be. The reader can expect to see the results or predictions related to the initial statement.
 - ▶ **Because of the recent escalation of energy costs—now the highest in the last ten years—concern has emerged about whether developing countries can sustain high rates of growth.** In Central America and East Africa, to take two examples, oil prices have jumped by XX percent in the last year alone, causing price rises in the manufacturing and transportation sectors, which, in turn, have made the countries' exports less competitive. Another effect can be seen in South Asia, where natural gas imports now consume YY percent of the government budget and therefore effectively reduce funding for other sectors. As a result of these soaring energy costs, fewer economists predict that developing nations can look forward to a reasonably promising future.
- ▶ **Process:** Explain how something works, step by step. Perhaps follow a sequence—first, second, third
 - ▶ Follow these four steps to write a script for a performance in English class. First, get into a group of three or four students. Next, choose the vocabulary you want to use. Then write a conversation around the vocabulary you have chosen. Finally, have your teacher check the grammar. When you have finished, you will have an excellent short play that you can feel confident putting on in front of your classmates and teacher.

Principles for Organizing Paragraphs

- ▶ **Description:** Provide specific details about what something looks, smells, tastes, sounds, or feels like
 - ▶ In front of me on the table sat a beautiful pure white bowl, simplistic in design, hiding a decadent surprise inside. In the bowl was hidden something that was not so pure, however, the irresistible indulgence was worth every calorie that I knew it contained. As I looked inside I saw on the bottom of the bowl a hot, tender brownie loaded with macadamia nuts. I knew from past experience that the nuts had a creamy and smooth texture, almost like white chocolate. On top of the brownie were two firmly packed scoops of ice cream, laying side by side, each one a different flavor. The scoop on the right was a rich vanilla, flecked with dark specks of vanilla bean. The scoop on the left was a dark, smooth, bittersweet chocolate. The scoops were just starting to melt tiny rivers of melted cream down the sides of the hot brownie, pooling on the bottom of the pure white bowl. These scoops of ice cream were draped with a sumptuous, rich, hot fudge sauce. Topping the luscious sauce was an ample dollop of whipped cream that was in perfect contrast to the dense, almost too rich dessert below. The whipped cream was topped with a shower of chocolate sprinkles and finely chopped walnuts. What finally completed this wonderful creation was a perfect maraschino cherry, its red juice sending tiny streams down the whole mountain of dessert delight. The contrast of colors, textures and flavors in this dessert appealed to every part of my senses. I could not wait to eat it.

Principles for Organizing Paragraphs

- ▶ **Definition:** It is a statement of the meaning of a term - a word, phrase, or other set of symbols. In other words, a definition explains through clarification and further explanation what we are trying to say with one or a few short words. Aristotle would say that the definition provides the *essence* of the term. The word or group of words that is to be defined is called the *definiendum*, and the word, group of words, or action that defines it is called the *definiens*
 - ▶ An elephant is a large grey animal native to Asia and Africa
 - ▶ A triangle is a plane figure with three straight bounding sides and three corners.
- ▶ **Narrative:** The purpose of narrative writing is to tell a story, whether that story is real or imaginary. Pieces in a narrative style will have characters, and through the narrative, the reader learns what happens to them. Narrative writing can also include dialogue.
 - ▶ As I cycled down the trail, I heard children giggling and whooping just around the bend. I crested a small hill and coasted down the curving path until I found the source of the noise. Three little girls sat in the grass by a big oak tree. They were startled to see me, and I smiled kindly to put them at ease.

“Whatcha doing?” I asked.

“Nothing,” they chirped in unison.

Introduction & Conclusion

- ▶ A strong conclusion will provide a sense of closure to the essay while again placing your concepts in a somewhat wider context. It will also, in some instances, add a stimulus to further thought. A conclusion works to remind your reader of the main points of your paper and summarizes what you want your reader to “take away” from your discussion.
- ▶ Tips for writing effective conclusions:
 - ▶ Begin with your rephrased thesis statement to remind your reader of the point of your paper.
 - ▶ Summarize the points you made in your paper and show how they support your argument; tie all the pieces of your paper together.
 - ▶ Tell your reader what the significance of your argument might be. Why is the discussion important? Do you want your reader to think differently, question something, or perform some action? Make a recommendation of what your reader should “do” with the information you just gave them, or share the importance of the topic.

Introduction

Hook

Focused topic & context

Do you use social media, apps, or YouTube?

Modern American youth are flooded with opportunities to access information and entertainment, often at the touch of a fingertip. Although many of these technological outlets have a negative connotation of “wasted brain space,” not all technology and screen time should be considered of little worth, or purely for mindless entertainment. In fact, because of technology’s widespread appeal and accessibility, it can be easily used to incorporate academic or educational purpose into a daily routine. Technology’s ability to captivate and engage a targeted audience can be harnessed and redirected from mindless entertainment into powerful tools which are not limited to amusement alone. Games, television, and apps can be used to appeal to a child’s intellect while developing technical skills; this creates a wealth of opportunities to enhance the behavioral and scholastic development of an adolescent. **The use of technology and screen time can be positive for children as it allows children to excel academically by experiencing the expanding definitions of classrooms and literacy as a whole, improves low-performing developmental skills, and can supplement in-class education for more academically advanced students.**

Thesis statement

Conclusion

Rephrased thesis statement

The use of technology and screen time have been proven to create a well-rounded and positive educational experience for children and adolescents. Technology supplements in-class education, improves low-performing developmental skills, and allows children to excel academically by embracing the expanding definition of the classroom. When the tool of technology is used to supplement formal education, it can be invaluable in aiding the positive development of a student's growing mind. Television programming can introduce new ideas or reinforce those which have already been presented, making concepts more familiar and contextual. Social skills can be learned by being presented to low-performing children via tablet apps or videos, which allow for developmental growth in a convenient and easily accessible way. Since the definition of a classroom itself has changed, online learning is a space in which high-performing students can flourish. As society embraces the inclusion of technology in everyday life, the field of education should not be an exception. Excluding technology from education goes against the reality of our lives. The future is coming fast, and we do not want our children to be left behind.

Summary of main ideas within the paper

Significance of the argument