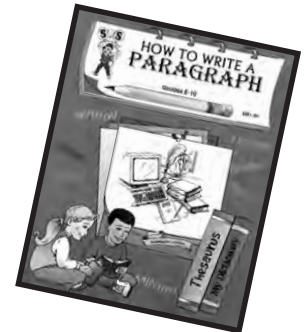


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Aims of the Unit

This resource is designed as a companion piece to *How to Write an Essay* and *How to Write a Composition*. Its aim is to help students write various kinds of paragraphs from grades five through the first years of secondary school. It will be helpful for students at higher levels of education who have had difficulty with writing in earlier years.

The resource contains many work sheets which can be used individually by students or in groups. Many of these work sheets are most useful if completed by pairs of students. It is also advisable for students to discuss the ideas generated by the work sheets in larger groups.

Much of this resource is written from a student perspective, so that teachers may give students the pages which they need or so that students can purchase the resource to use as they write their compositions at home.



WHAT IS A PARAGRAPH?

A paragraph is a group of sentences which all talk about one topic or subject or idea. Sometimes a paragraph can stand alone. In this case, all the sentences will talk about only one thing. If a paragraph contains sentences which all discuss one idea, the paragraph is said to possess **UNITY**. Unity means that there is only one idea in the paragraph. The sentences in the paragraph do not talk about any other ideas, only the main idea.

The main idea of the paragraph is stated in the **TOPIC SENTENCE**. The topic sentence is usually the first sentence in the paragraph, but it does not have to be. Sometimes the topic sentence may be in the second, third, fourth or even the last sentence in a paragraph. A writer who pays attention to the topic sentence and writes a good one will ensure that the paragraph possesses unity. The **CONCLUDING SENTENCE** is not only the last sentence in the paragraph, but it has another job: It sums up the main idea of the paragraph.

But the sentences in the paragraph also have to be arranged in order that makes some sense. This arrangement of sentences is called **COHERENCE**. If a paragraph possesses coherence, then one sentence will lead logically to another. The writer will not skip around or jump from one idea to another. There are many different ways to create coherence in a paragraph and some of these are discussed in the next few pages.

A good paragraph is one which contains unity and coherence. The ideas are presented in the topic sentence and summed up in the concluding sentence.

Usually, a paragraph does not stand alone. It is part of a longer piece of writing which consists of several (or sometimes many) paragraphs. The connected paragraph is discussed in a later section of this resource.



EXERCISES IN UNITY

- A) The topic sentence for a paragraph is given below, followed by a number of details. Decide which details should be included in a paragraph which uses the topic sentence. Cross out details which should not be included. Give a reason why you have chosen to discard each detail.

TOPIC SENTENCE: Sam is one of the best players on the baseball team.

DETAILS:

1. Sam is a good athlete.
2. Sam is very tall for his age.
3. Sam likes to eat pizza, but he does not like spaghetti.
4. Sam hit two home runs in the last game.
5. Baseball is one of the best games played professionally in North America.
6. When the pitcher throws the ball, Sam has a good eye and can determine where the ball will go in relation to the plate.
7. Sam can run to first base faster than anyone on the team.
8. Sam is a member of the safety patrol at school.
9. Baseball was invented by Abner Doubleday in Cooperstown, New York.
10. Sam can pitch, hit and catch very well.
11. Sam is a very good player at first base or short stop.
12. Michelle is almost as good a player as Sam.
13. Sam likes the new glove his father bought him for his birthday.
14. Sam can read the pitcher very well and knows when he should attempt to steal a base.
15. One day when our team was losing, Sam hit a grand-slam home run, which allowed us to win the game.
16. Sam prefers baseball to hockey.



EXERCISES IN UNITY (Continued)

- B) The topic sentence for a paragraph is given below, followed by a number of details. Decide which details should be included in a paragraph which uses the topic sentence. Cross out details which should not be included. Give a reason why you have chosen to discard each detail.

TOPIC SENTENCE: My favorite place to visit is the beach.

DETAILS:

1. The water is very warm even in the early summer.
2. There is a bird museum at the beach.
3. The bird museum has pictures of birds that you can see along the shore and in the trees.
4. I enjoy looking for different kinds of birds.
5. There are carnival rides at the beach.
6. I don't like the hot dogs sold at the cafeteria at the beach.
7. The beach is never crowded with people.
8. I like playing in the sand.
9. Sometimes crabs come out of their holes in the sand and play in the water.
10. I really like swimming in the waves and body surfing.
11. I like to be around many people when I am on holidays.
12. There are many shells at the beach, and I can make things from them.
13. My mother and father let me stay up later in the summer.
14. Sometimes we have a barbecue at the beach and I really like the hamburgers my dad makes there.
15. When it rains there is not much to do at the beach.
16. Being outside in the sunshine gives me a good appetite at lunch time.
17. My older sister lets me bury her in the sand up to her neck.