

PARAGRAPH WRITING

If you look at any printed prose book, you will see that each chapter is divided up into sections, the first line of each being usually indented slightly to the right. These sections are called Paragraphs. Chapters, essays and other prose compositions are broken up into paragraphs; to make the reading of them easier, for the beginning of a new paragraph marks a change of topic, or a step in the development of an argument or of a story. In writing essays or other compositions, it is important to know how to divide them properly into paragraphs; for an essay not so broken up, looks uninteresting and is not easy to read.

Definition:- A paragraph is a number of sentences grouped together and relating to one topic; or, a group of related sentences that develop a single point.

These definitions show that the paragraphs of a composition are not mere arbitrary divisions. The division of a chapter into paragraphs must be made according to the changes of ideas introduced.

There is, therefore, no rule as to the length of paragraphs. They may be short or long according to the necessity of the case. A paragraph may consist of a single sentence, or of many sentences.

(**Note.**-In. this respect, the paragraphs of a piece of prose differ from the stanzas or verses of a poem. The stanzas of a poem are usually of the same length and pattern; but paragraphs are long or short according to the amount of matter to be expressed under each head).

TYPES OF PARAGRAPHS

There are four types that are ideally suited for this genre. Each has different characteristics that'll work best in different areas of your book, as explained below:

1. **Narrative Paragraph** -- tells a story about an event, adventure, scene, or happening
2. **Descriptive Paragraph** -- describes specific sensory details about a person, place, or thing
3. **Expository Paragraph** -- gives information, explains directions, or shows how something happens
4. **Persuasive Paragraph** -- tries to convince the reader of the author's point of view

Each one of the four paragraph types fulfills a different purpose:

The expository paragraph type is used to convey well-researched findings to back up your solution in a way that *establishes you as an expert* in the reader's eyes.

The descriptive paragraph type is used to *paint vivid pictures* in your reader's mind of someone like them, both before and after they apply your solution.

The narrative paragraph type is used to take your reader through an emotional journey from problem to solution, as lived by the characters in your case studies.

The persuasive paragraph type is used to convince your reader why your solution will be different than any other than they might have tried in the past.

Let's now go over each paragraph type in detail:

Characteristics of the Expository Paragraph Type

The expository paragraph type is used to build your credibility as an expert. You'll achieve this goal by presenting facts, statistics and other data required to back up your solution.

What is This Paragraph Type Not Used For?

This paragraph type is not used to express your opinion or to influence your reader. Try to stay away from "*loaded words*" that carry a high emotional charge, since they'll create a conflict with the factual nature of the type.

Expository Paragraph Example

"The fundamental question of work and leisure raised by Weiss is particularly relevant as a generation called Millennials moves firmly into the workforce. I know many Millennials and in general they're hard-working, passionate young men and women who are eager to work, but they want to enjoy and draw meaning from their jobs. Most are sensible enough to have a day-job to pay the bills, but many have a "side hustle" – a hobby or a business idea into which they pour their passion and hope to one day monetize. Weiss recognizes this trend in workers, but an interesting disconnect between Weiss' article and today is the discussion of self-employment. Weiss notes that self-employed workers are generally most satisfied even if they earn less, but also makes the observation that self-employment has significantly declined.

In this example the author is using expository paragraphs to present and analyze research findings by a recognized expert in the field.

Characteristics of the Descriptive Paragraph Type

As the old adage says, a picture is worth a thousand words, and this is where the descriptive paragraph type comes in handy. One of the best devices to engage your reader's senses is to paint a clear picture of how your solution will work in their life.

The descriptive paragraph type is not only used to engage your audience's five senses but also their feelings. Your goal is to engage your reader so closely that they feel they're actually "*there*." This is a powerful literary device used to great effect in the fiction genre and you'll be borrowing from it for your nonfiction book.

What is This Paragraph Type Not Used For?

This paragraph type is not used to narrate. In other words, the descriptive type is never used to tell a story or to give insights into the thoughts or the emotional state of characters in your book.

Descriptive Paragraph Example

"Coming down to Bridge Park had been a good idea, he decided. Leaving the crowded mass of the city behind he'd ridden the train south, through the razed land and out onto the delta. Rice paddies stretched to every horizon, blurring the line between land, river and sea. And then, in the shadow of the ruined supports of the bridge, the park rose like a garden oasis above the lowlands. He obviously wasn't the only person with the same idea today, and the park was lifted by the shrieks of children playing on the bridge replica fun zone behind him."

In the above passage, the author is using the descriptive paragraph type to paint a picture in the mind of the reader by using specific adjectives and adverbs that appeal to the reader's senses.

Characteristics of the Narrative Paragraph Type

Narrative writing can be used very effectively in problem-solving nonfiction through the power of story-telling. Nonfiction books without any story-telling are not as engaging as they could be.

Use stories to create an emotional connection with your readers by making them become invested in characters that they can relate to – characters that also "*feel their pain*." They could be about yourself, past clients, or fictional characters that combine the experiences of multiple clients.

What is This Paragraph Type Not Used For?

The narrative paragraph type is not used to introduce facts and figures and it's not used to influence or persuade your audience.

Narrative Paragraph Example

"Christopher Reeve was one courageous person who fully accepted an unexpected change in direction in his life. The icon of superhuman strength in the 80's, he was the quintessential

Superman. An actor of great appeal and talent, he represented the ideal combination of manliness, strength, seeker of justice, and savior of humankind. In May 1995, he was riding his horse and had a serious fall. The accident damaged his spinal cord such that he was left a quadriplegic and had to use a machine to help him breathe. The accident sent shock waves around the world. How could Superman be rendered a quadriplegic? It was unfathomable. After many months of grueling physical therapy, he learned how to function in this new altered state. The emotional toll was great as he and his family struggled with the changes this accident brought into their lives. Within a year, however, he had founded a charitable organization called the Christopher Reeve Foundation in order to raise money for research on spinal cord injuries and made it his mission to find a way for all victims of these devastating injuries to walk again.”

Here the author is using the narrative paragraph type to portray the dramatic fall in the fortunes of a celebrity after a traumatic life event, and how he resolved the conflict in his life to become a real-life superhero in the eyes of his followers.

Characteristics of the Persuasive Paragraph Type

The persuasive paragraph type can be used to great effect in problem-solving nonfiction books. Your goal is not just to communicate and teach new skills, but also to persuade your reader to take action and implement your solution in their lives.

You want to persuade readers by appealing to them on an emotional level and using your connection and your credibility as an expert to convince them to side with you. The aim of persuasive writing is to align your reader’s goals with your own.

What is This Paragraph Type Not Used For?

Doing anything that takes your reader out of the plane of reality – such as by going into a detailed description of places, circumstances or events or into a deep narrative.

Persuasive Paragraph Example

“‘I’m too old’ or ‘It’s too late to change’ are nothing but limiting beliefs. Like any other beliefs, they’re fully under your control and are totally replaceable. In the end, you’re the one who truly runs the show, as much as you’re taught to believe the opposite. When it comes to making changes in your life, you have the ultimate say. If you end up doing what others think you should, it’s only because on some level you’ve made the decision to believe that their ideas are more worthy than your own. If you want to change, you have to start believing in what you want to do, no matter what other people’s ‘opinions’ are. And you have to believe that the changes you want to make are worth it, regardless of your age or your circumstances. Life consists of a collection of ‘moments.’ This very moment and every moment after it are what your life is made of. If you live your life worrying about the future, regretting the past or even living how others tell you to live, then you aren’t living ‘your’ moments. All it really takes to become in charge of your own

life is to simply decide to do so. Your process of reinvention is 100% yours. Don't be afraid to use it fully to our advantage. Don't be afraid to think big thoughts. Remember, you can make a difference: you are the difference!"

In this example, the author is using persuasive writing to influence readers to take action by changing their belief system through replacing limiting beliefs with empowering ones.

ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1

Choose the best topic sentence: [_____] Unlike some breeds of dogs, they do not need a lot of exercise every day. Crowds and loud noises do not make them nervous. Also, they do not mind being alone for hours, if you need to be away at work. On top of all this, they are known to be patient and loving with children. If you are a city-dwelling family looking for a pet, I highly recommend this breed of dog.

- a. Every family should have a dog.
- b. Greyhounds are a good choice of dog for people who live in cities.
- c. Not all dogs are happy living in the city.
- d. All breed of dogs are pretty much alike -- it's all the same.

Choose the best topic sentence: [_____] She always takes the time to listen to me. When I was in the hospital, she came to visit me. She always makes sure I get the medication I need. Several of my friends now go to see her, and they like her as much as I do!

- a. I am very happy with my doctor.
- b. It is hard to find a good doctor.
- c. Seeing a doctor has become very expensive.
- d. I love my mother.

Choose TWO supporting sentences for this topic sentence: I need to look for a new job.

- a. Since we now have another child, my salary really isn't enough for our family.
- b. I like working with my brother.
- c. The commute is very long, and I would like to spend more time with my family.
- d. This is a tough economy, and I am lucky that I still have a job.

Choose the best topic sentence: [_____] Many people who earn the minimum wage are trying to support families with this salary. No one working full-time and earning the minimum wage makes enough money to pay for rent, food, and other necessities. If we raise the minimum wage, families will have more money to spend, and therefore other businesses will make more money. For so many reasons, it is the right thing to do.

- a. We must worry about jobs, not wages.
- b. Parents in New York City have a lot of expenses.
- c. This economy is especially hard for small business owners.
- d. It is time to raise the minimum wage.

Choose TWO supporting sentences for this topic sentence: Young children should not be allowed to cross Fourth Avenue by themselves.

- a. There are many good restaurants on that street.
- b. Last year, two children were injured while crossing that street.
- c. Cars are always speeding down that avenue.
- d. There is a school located on Fourth Avenue.

Choose TWO supporting sentences for this topic sentence: Students need to learn good ways to study.

- a. Sometimes doing homework in a group can be helpful.
- b. Making friends is important to happiness and success.
- c. Many high-paying jobs require a college degree.
- d. Studying instead of sleeping doesn't help learning or test scores.

ACTIVITY 2

This activity tests students' ability to identify the following types of paragraphs: expository, narrative, persuasive, and descriptive.

1. In this type of paragraph, the author is writing about what a person, place, or thing is like.
2. This type of paragraph is used to present information, ideas, or opinions.
3. The goal of this type of paragraph is to convince another person to change, or at least

think about changing, their opinion about something.

4. Which type of paragraph would this topic sentence best go with: My best friend's freckled face always has a glowing, crooked smile?
5. Which type of paragraph would this topic sentence best go with: The day I won first place in the box car derby race was the proudest day of my life?
6. This paragraph is used to tell a story. There is a logical sequence of events.
7. Which type of paragraph would this topic sentence best go with: The Himalayan Mountains are the tallest mountains in the world?
8. Which type of paragraph would this topic sentence best go with: Despite what dog lovers might believe, cats actually make better pets?
9. This type of paragraph is just like a painting of something or someone.
10. Which type of paragraph would this topic sentence best go with: A few days ago, I was going to my home when I witnessed an accident?