

Chapter 1

WHAT IS A PARAGRAPH?

An Overview

A paragraph is a basic unit of organization in writing in which a group of related sentences develops one main idea. A paragraph can be as short as one sentence or as long as ten sentences. The number of sentences is unimportant; however, the paragraph should be long enough to develop the main idea clearly. The following model contains all of the elements of a good paragraph. Read it carefully two or three times and try to analyze its structure.

Model 1: Paragraph structure

Gold

Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics. Gold has a lustrous beauty that is resistant to corrosion*. Therefore, it is suitable for jewelry, coins, and ornamental purposes. Gold never needs to be polished and will remain beautiful forever. For example, a Macedonian* coin remains as untarnished* today as the day it was minted twenty-three centuries ago. Another important characteristic of gold is its usefulness to industry and science. For many years, it has been used in hundreds of industrial applications. The most recent use of gold is, for instance, in astronauts' suits. Astronauts wear gold-plated heat shields for protection outside the spaceship. In conclusion, gold is treasured not only for its beauty, but also for its utility.

THE THREE PARTS OF A PARAGRAPH

A paragraph has three major structural parts: a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence.

The topic sentence states the main idea of the paragraph. It not only names the topic of the paragraph, but it also limits the topic to one or two areas that can be discussed completely in the space of a single paragraph. The specific area is called the controlling idea. Notice how the topic sentence of the model states both the topic and the controlling idea:

Topic (Topic) (Controlling Idea)

Sentence Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics

corrosion: chemical damage Macedonian: from an ancient Mediterranean culture

Supporting sentences develop the topic sentence. That is, they explain the topic sentence by giving reasons, examples, facts, statistics, and quotations. Some of the supporting sentences that explain the topic sentence about gold are:

First of all, gold has a lustrous beauty that is resistant to corrosion. For

Supporting example, a Macedonian coin remains as untarnished today as the day it was

Sentences minted twenty-three centuries ago. Another important characteristic of gold is

Its utility in industry and science. The most recent application of gold is in astronauts' suits.

The concluding sentence signals the end of the paragraph and leaves the reader with important points to remember:

Concluding Sentence In conclusion, gold is treasured not only for its beauty, but also for its utility.

TWO ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS

In addition to the three structural parts of a paragraph, a good paragraph also has the elements of unity and coherence.

Unity

Unity means that you discuss only one main idea in a paragraph. The main idea is stated in the topic sentence, and then each and every supporting sentence develops that idea. If, for example, you announce in your topic sentence that you are going to discuss two important characteristics of gold, discuss only those. Do not discuss anything else such as the price of gold, the history of gold, or gold mining.

Coherence

Coherence means that your paragraph is easy to read and understand because

(1) your supporting sentences are in some kind of logical order, and (2) your ideas are connected by the use of appropriate transition signals. For example, in the paragraph about gold, there are two main supporting ideas: gold is beautiful, and gold is useful. Each of these supporting ideas is discussed, one after the other, and an example is given for each one. This is one kind of logical order. Furthermore, the relationship between the ideas is clearly shown by using appropriate transition words and phrases such as "first of all," "the second important characteristic," "for example," and "in conclusion."

In summary, a well-written paragraph contains five elements: a topic sentence, supporting sentences, a concluding sentence, unity, and coherence. In the first section of this book, you will study and practice each of these elements.

THE ASSIGNMENT FORMAT

Below are instructions and a model of one possible format for the assignments you will prepare for this class. Your instructor may ask you to use this format, or s/he may have other requirements.

1. Use only 8" x 11" lined, 3-hole notebook paper.
2. Write a title in the center of the top line.
3. Write the practice number, page number and practice name in the upper left-hand corner.
4. Write your name, the course number and date in the upper right-hand corner.
5. Leave one-inch margins on both sides of the page.

6. Indent the first line of every paragraph.*
7. Write on every other line.
8. Number your pages.
9. Write in ink..

Notice that the first line in the paragraph is indented-moved to the right. While the practice of indenting is changing, particularly in business letter writing. It is still the accepted practice in academic writing.

HOW TO WRITE A TITLE

Single paragraphs do not usually have titles. Giving your practice paragraphs titles, however, may help you to organize and limit your thoughts. For longer essays or reports, though, the use of titles (as you will see in this book) will become more necessary.

A title tells the reader what the topic of the paragraph is. It is usually a word or phrase, not a sentence. It should be brief, but not so brief that it doesn't tell the reader what to expect.

1. The first, last, and all important words in a title are capitalized. Prepositions and articles are not important words. Prepositions of more than five letters, however, may be capitalized. Articles that begin the title, of course, are capitalized.
2. The title is not underlined.
3. The title is not enclosed in quotation marks, nor is it ended with a period.

Example My Greatest Culture Shock

How to Choose a Good Used Car

Inflation Affects Everybody

Backpacking in the Mountains

Writing Academic English

Riding the Subway in New York

The Topic Sentence:

Every good paragraph has a topic sentence, which clearly states the topic and the controlling idea of the paragraph. It is a complete sentence. It is usually (but not always) the first sentence in the paragraph.

A topic sentence is the most important sentence in a paragraph. It briefly indicates what the paragraph is going to discuss. For this reason, the topic sentence is a helpful guide to both the writer and the reader. The writer can see what information to include (and what information to exclude). The reader can see what the paragraph is going to be about and is therefore better prepared to understand it.

There are three important points to remember about the topic sentence:

A topic sentence is a complete sentence; that is, it contains a subject, a verb, and (usually) a complement.

The following are not complete sentences.

Driving on freeways.

The importance of gold.

How to register for college classes.

A topic sentence contains both a topic and a controlling idea. It names the topic and then limits the topic to a specific area to be discussed in the space of a single paragraph.

The following examples show how a topic sentence states both the topic and the controlling idea in a complete sentence.

Driving on freeways requires skill and alertness.

Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics.

Registering for college classes can be a frustrating experience for new students.

A topic sentence gives only the main idea; therefore, it is the most general statement in the paragraph. It does not give any specific details.

This is an example of a general statement that could serve as a topic sentence:

Good The Arabic origin of many English words is not always obvious.

This sentence, on the other hand, is too specific to serve as a topic sentence:

Too Specific The slang expression "so long" (meaning goodbye) is probably a corruption of the Arabic "salaam."

POSITION OF TOPIC SENTENCES

The topic sentence may be the first or last sentence in a paragraph. The topic sentence may also be the first and last sentence of the paragraph-"sandwich style." A "sandwich-style" paragraph is especially helpful to your reader if the paragraph is very long. The second topic sentence in the "sandwich-style" paragraph also serves as a concluding sentence.

Study the following three paragraphs. Notice the different positions for the topic sentence in each. The topic sentences are underlined.

Model 2: Position of topic sentences

Hurricanes

Hurricanes, which are also called cyclones, exert tremendous power. These violent storms are often a hundred miles in diameter, and their winds can reach velocities* of seventy-five miles per hour or more. Furthermore, the strong winds and heavy rainfall that accompany them can completely destroy a small town in a couple of hours. The energy that is released by a hurricane in one day exceeds the total energy consumed by humankind

throughout the world in one year.

Famous School "Failures"

Albert Einstein, one of the world's geniuses, failed his university entrance examinations on his first attempt. William Faulkner, one of America's noted writers, never finished college because he could not pass his English courses. Sir Winston Churchill, who is considered one of the masters of the English language, had to have special tutoring in English during elementary school. These few examples show that failure in school does not always predict failure in life.

Synonyms

Synonyms, words that have the same basic meaning, do not always have the same emotional meaning. For example, the words "stingy" and "frugal" both mean "careful with money." However, to call a person stingy is an insult, while the word frugal has a much more positive connotation*. Similarly, a person wants to be slender but not skinny, and aggressive, but not pushy. Therefore, you should be careful in choosing words because many so-called synonyms are not really synonymous at all.

Velocities: speed connotation: implied meaning

Paragraph 1

_____ a. Next, add antifreeze to your windshield washer fluid; otherwise, the fluid will freeze and possibly break the container.

_____ b. First, put on snow tires if you plan to drive on snowy, icy roads very often.

_____ c. Driving in winter, especially on snowy, icy roads, can be less troublesome if you take a few simple precautions*.

_____ d. Finally, it is also a good idea to carry tire chains, a can of spray to unfreeze door locks and a windshield scraper in your car when driving in winter weather.

_____ e. Second, check the amount of antifreeze in your radiator and add more if necessary.

Paragraph 2

_____ a. Furthermore, researchers are continuing to work on the development of an efficient, electrically powered automobile.

_____ b. Researchers in the automobile industry are experimenting with different types of engines and fuels as alternatives to the conventional gasoline engines.

_____ c. One new type of engine, which burns diesel oil instead of gasoline, has been available for several years.

_____ d. Finally, several automobile manufacturers are experimenting with methanol, which is a mixture of gasoline and methyl alcohol, as an automobile fuel.

_____ e. A second type is the gas turbine engine, which can use fuels made from gasoline, diesel oil, kerosene, other petroleum distillates*, or methanol.

Precautions: advance action to prevent something Distillate: a substance obtained from another substance.

Paragraph 3

_____ a. Later on, people began to write on pieces of leather, which were rolled into scrolls.

_____ b. In the earliest times, people carved or painted messages on rocks.

_____ c. In the Middle Ages, heavy paper called parchment was used for writing. books were laboriously copied by hand.

_____ d. With the invention of the printing press in the middle of the fifteenth century, the modern printing industry was born.

_____ e. Some form of written communication has been used throughout the centuries.

Paragraph 4

_____ a. If there had been a big storm on the day of a baby's birth, the baby might have been named Thunder Cloud.

_____ b. American Indian names are very descriptive, for Indians were usually named for a physical attribute. for an occurrence in nature, or for an animal.

_____ c. Grey Eagle. Red Dog. Big Bear, and Spotted Wolf are examples of Indians named after animals.

_____ d. Indians with distinctive physical characteristics might be given such names as Big Foot or Crooked Leg.

Paragraph 5

_____ a. For one thing, individual I.Q* scores vary considerably.

_____ b. Many experts also question whether I.Q. scores are related to intelligence.

_____ c. Furthermore, most psychologists agree that intelligence tests are biased* in favor of middle-class children.

_____ d. The validity* of standardized Intelligence tests is being seriously questioned by educators and psychologists.

_____ e. In fact, motivation* seems to be just as important as intelligence in determining a person's ability to learn.

I.Q: Intelligence Quotient motivation: desire biased: prejudiced validity: truth

Motivation:desire

THE TWO PARTS OF A TOPIC SENTENCE

A topic sentence has two essential parts: the topic and the controlling idea. The topic names the subject or main idea of the paragraph. The controlling idea makes specific comments about the topic, which indicates what the rest of the paragraph will say about the topic. It limits or controls the topic to a specific aspect of the topic to be discussed in the space of a single paragraph,

TOPIC CONTROLLING IDEA

are easy to prepare.

In this example, the topic is named: convenience foods. A specific comment is then made about the topic: they are easy to prepare. From this sentence, the reader immediately knows that the supporting sentences in the remainder of the paragraph will explain or prove how quick and easy it is to prepare convenience foods, and perhaps give some examples (frozen dinners, canned soups, etc.).

TOPIC CONTROLLING IDEA

reflects the native foods of America's immigrant population.

In this example, the topic is American food. The controlling idea of this topic sentence is that Americans eat a lot of food that originally came from other countries. Therefore, the reader should expect the paragraph to give examples of popular "foreign" foods such as fried rice (Chinese), tacos (Mexican), sauerbraten (German), sukiyaki (Japanese), spaghetti (Italian), and so on.

TOPIC CONTROLLING IDEA

consumes enormous quantities of junk food.

In this example, the topic is the average American teenager. The controlling idea about the topic states that the American teenager eats a lot of junk food. Thus, the rest of the paragraph should discuss the quantities and types of junk food that American teenagers eat (soft drinks, potato chips, candy bars, etc.).

Practice 2: Identifying the Parts of a Topic Sentence

Circle the topic and underline the controlling idea in each of the following

Example requires skill and alertness.

1. Driving in Tokyo requires nerves of steel*.

2. Driving in Tokyo requires an aggressive attitude.
 3. Living in a dormitory helps foreign students improve their English faster
 4. Living in a dormitory helps foreign students learn about American m more quickly.
 5. Living in a dormitory may cause severe culture shock for some foreign dents.
 6. San Francisco is famous for its temperate climate.
 7. San Francisco is well known for its many tourist attractions.
 8. San Francisco has a great variety of ethnic neighborhoods.
 9. Meeting and making friends with Americans is a major problem for many foreign students.
 10. Communicating in English is a major problem for foreign students.
 11. In my opinion, many television commercials are misleading.
 12. In the opinion of the nation's economic experts, the primary cause of inflation is our dependence on imported oil.
 13. A good topic sentence has two essential parts.
 14. Owning a large automobile is quickly becoming an expensive luxury.
- Ethnic: of different racial and cultural background nerves of steel: very strong nerves (idiom)

WRITING TOPIC SENTENCES: TWO REMINDERS

One: A topic sentence should be neither too general nor too specific. If it is too general, the reader cannot tell exactly what the paragraph is going to discuss. If it is too specific, the writer may not have anything left to write about in the rest of the paragraph.

Think of a topic sentence like the name of a particular course on a restaurant menu. When you order food in a restaurant, you want to know more about a particular course than just "meat" or "soup" or "salad." You want to know generally what kind of salad it is. Potato salad? Mixed green salad? Fruit salad? You do not necessarily want to know all of its ingredients.

Similarly, the reader of a paragraph wants to know generally what to expect in a paragraph; the reader does not want to learn all of the specific details in the first sentence.

Too

General

Too

Specific

Good

American food is terrible

American food is tasteless and greasy because Americans use too many canned, frozen, and prepackaged foods and because everything is fried in oil or butter.

American food is tasteless and greasy.

Two: Do not include too many unrelated ideas in your topic sentence; if you do, your paragraph will not be unified.

Too many ideas

San Francisco is famous for its temperate climate, its many tourist attractions, and its cosmopolitan* atmosphere

The three parts of this controlling idea are too unrelated for a single paragraph. They would require three separate paragraphs.

Good

San Francisco is famous for its many tourist attractions.

Cosmopolitan: International

Writing Topic Sentences

Write a topic sentence for each of the following topics. Remember to include both a topic (main idea) and a controlling idea.

Example

Topic: The effect(s) of television on children.

Topic Sentence: Television is harmful to children because it teaches them violence as a way of life.

or

Television retards a child's reading ability.

1. The effect(s) of smoking on a person's health.
2. The benefits of foreign travel.
3. The importance of a college education for your field of study (engineering, medical technology, art, business, etc.)...
4. The cause(s) of a current problem in your country (or in the United States).
5. A cultural difference between your country and the United States.

Choose, either individually or with your classmates as a group, five additional topics that interest you. Write these topics in the spaces below. Then write topic sentences for each.

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

The Concluding Sentence

Now that you know how to write a good topic sentence for a paragraph, you should also learn how to write a good concluding sentence. A concluding sentence is not absolutely necessary, but it is very often helpful to the reader because it signals the end of the paragraph and because it reminds him/her of your important points

A concluding sentence serves three purposes:

1. It signals the end of the paragraph. (Use an end-of-paragraph signal such as "In conclusion," "In summary," "Finally," etc.)
2. It summarizes the main points of the paragraph.
3. It gives a final comment on your topic and leaves the reader with the most important ideas to think about.

The examples below demonstrate two different types of concluding sentences. The first one paraphrases the topic sentence; i.e., the concluding sentence repeats the main idea of the topic sentence in different words. The second example summarizes the two main points of the paragraph, which were not specifically stated in the topic sentence.

Model 3: Concluding sentences:

Synonyms

Synonyms, words that have the same basic meaning, do not always have the same emotional meaning. For example, the words "stingy" and "frugal" both mean "careful with money." However, to call a person stingy is an insult, while the word frugal has a much more positive connotation. Similarly, a person wants to be slender but not skinny, and aggressive but not pushy. Therefore, you should be careful in choosing words because many so-called synonyms are not really synonymous at all.

Gold

Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics. First of all, gold has a lustrous beauty that is resistant to corrosion. Therefore, it is suitable for jewelry, coins, and ornamental purposes. Gold never needs to be polished and will remain beautiful forever. For example, a Macedonian coin remains as untarnished today as the day it was minted twenty-three centuries ago. Another important characteristic of gold is its usefulness to

industry and science. For many years, it has been used in hundreds of industrial applications. The most recent use of gold is in astronauts' suits. Astronauts wear gold-plated heat shields for protection outside the spaceship. In conclusion, gold is treasured not only for its beauty, but also for its utility.

Practice 4: Writing Concluding Sentences

STEP 1 Underline the topic sentence in each paragraph.

STEP 2 Determine the main idea of each paragraph.

STEP 3 Add a good concluding sentence to each. You may either paraphrase the topic or summarize the main points.

STEP 4 Begin each concluding sentence with an end-of-paragraph signal.

Paragraph 1

Paragraph 2

i.e. that is (from the Latin abbreviation in cat) conversion: change

Paragraph 3

Paragraph 4

Paragraph 5

Insulation: protection fibrous: containing fiber kimono: lounging robe

Siesta: afternoon nap patio: courtyard chaise longue: lounge chair

Penalized: punished

Review: What Is a Paragraph?

WRITING PRACTICE

Choose a topic from the list below and write a paragraph six to ten sentences in length.

STEP 1 Begin your paragraph with a good topic sentence and underline it.

STEP 2 Write several supporting sentences that explain or support the topic sentence.

STEP 3 Write a good concluding sentence and underline it.

STEP 4 Check your paragraph against the Paragraph Checklist on page 17 before you hand it in.

Topic Suggestions

Arranged marriages.

Uncontrolled population growth.

Computers, calculators, or machines in general.

Left-handed people.

The advantages of having a college education.

Owning a car.

Paragraph checklist

Form: _____ Does your paragraph have a title?

_____ Did you write on the correct side of the paper?

_____ Did you indent?

_____ Did you write on every other line?

(Refer to pages 3 for complete instructions)

Topic Sentence: _____ Does your topic sentence contain a controlling idea?

Concluding Sentence: _____ Does your paragraph have a concluding sentence?

WRITING UNDER PRESSURE

Choose one of your best topic sentences from Practice 3 on page 12 and write a paragraph six to ten sentences long on the subject of that sentence. Check your paragraph against the Paragraph Checklist before you hand it in.

Your instructor will give you a time limit. Suggested limits:

Writing Time –13 minutes

Checking Time – 2 minutes

Total – 15 minutes

Chapter 2

UNITY AND SIMPLE OUTLINING

Another important element of a good paragraph is unity.

Every good paragraph has unity, which means that in each paragraph, only one main idea is discussed. If you start to discuss a new idea, start a new paragraph. Furthermore, every supporting sentence in the paragraph must be directly related to the main idea. Do not include any information that does not directly support the topic sentence.

Uni- is a Latin prefix meaning "one." When we talk about paragraph unity, we mean that you should discuss only one main idea in each paragraph. For example, if your paragraph is about the advantages of a college education, discuss only that. Do not discuss the disadvantages in getting a college education. To make it even easier, discuss only one advantage in each paragraph, such as the ability to get a better job. However, sometimes it is possible to discuss two or even three aspects of the same idea in one paragraph if they are closely related to each other. For example, it is possible to discuss both "better job" and "better salary" in the same paragraph because they are closely related, but it is not a good idea to discuss both "better job" and "better general knowledge about the world" in the same paragraph because they are not so closely related.

The second part of unity is that every supporting sentence must directly explain or prove the main idea, which is stated in the topic sentence. Sometimes students write supporting sentences that are "off the topic." For example, if you are writing a paragraph about the high cost of college tuition, you could mention inflation as a factor. But if you write several sentences about inflation, you are getting "off the topic," and your paragraph will not have unity.

Study the two paragraphs below. Both paragraphs discuss the same topic. In your opinion, which paragraph has unity and which one doesn't? Explain how individual sentences break the unity either by introducing a new idea or by being "off the topic."

Model 4: Unity

Surviving Cancer

Progress is gradually being made in the fight against cancer. In the early 1900s, few cancer patients had any hope of long-term survival. In the 1930s, less than one in five cancer victims lived more than five years. In the 1950s, the ratio was one in four. Currently, the ratio is down to one in three. The gain from one in four to one in three represents about 58,000 lives saved each year.

Surviving Cancer

Progress is gradually being made in the fight against cancer. In the early 1900s, few cancer patients had any hope of long-term survival. But because of advances in medical technology, progress has been made so that currently one in three cancer patients survives. It has been proven that smoking is a direct cause of lung cancer. However, the battle has not yet been won. Although cures for some forms of cancer have been discovered, other forms of cancer are still increasing. Heart disease is also increasing.

Practice 5: Unity I

The following short essay has not been divided into paragraphs, but it should contain six: an introductory paragraph, four "body" paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph.

STEP 1 Read the entire essay once or twice.

STEP 2 Decide where each new paragraph should begin. (Where does the author begin to discuss a different topic?)

STEP 3 Underline the first sentence of each paragraph.

Culture, Logic, and Rhetoric

'Adapted from Robert B. Kaplan. "Cultural Thought Patterns in Intercultural Education." Language Learning 16 (1966). pp. 1-20. Used with permission of the publishers.

logic: way of thinking or reasoning coordinators: words that join equal elements

linear: in a straight line subordination: the joining of two unequal elements vague: unclear digressive: wandering away from the main topic

Practice 6: Unity II

A. Each of the following paragraphs breaks the rule of unity because it contains: one or more sentences that do not directly support the topic sentence.

STEP 1 Locate and underline the topic sentence of each paragraph.

STEP 2 Find the sentence(s) that do not support the topic sentence and cross them out.

Paragraph 1

Paragraph 2

Paragraph 3

suburbs: small communities surrounding a large city

B. Each of the following paragraphs has not only two or more topic sentences but also irrelevant sentences.

STEP 1 Decide where each paragraph should be divided into two or more paragraphs,

Underline the topic sentence of each.

STEP 2 Find the irrelevant sentence(s) and cross them out.

Paragraph 4

Paragraph 5

rationed: limited in amount recycle: use again

acre: unit of area (1 acre 4.047 square meters) proponents: people in favor of something magnitude: great size

Simple Paragraph Outlining

An outline is like an architect's plan for a house. An architect plans a house before it is built to make sure that all the parts will fit. Like an architect, you should plan a paragraph before you write it to make sure that all of your ideas will fit. Learning to outline will improve your writing for three reasons. First of all, it will help you organize your ideas. Specifically, an outline will ensure that you won't include any irrelevant ideas, that you won't leave out any important points, and that your supporting sentences will be in logical order. Second, learning to outline will help you write more quickly. It may take some practice at first, but once you become used to outlining your ideas before you start to write, you will be surprised at how fast you will actually be able to write. Preparing an outline is 75 percent of the work. The actual writing becomes easier because you don't have to worry about what you are going to say: you already have a well-organized plan to follow. Finally, your grammar will improve because you will be able to concentrate on it, not on your thoughts or organization. Improved organization, speed, and grammar make learning to outline well worth the effort.

There are several different outline forms that can be used. The form used in this book is particularly helpful for students who have never practiced outlining before. However, your instructor may recommend a different form.

SIMPLE OUTLINES

A simple outline for a short paragraph might look like this:

Topic Sentence

Indent and | A. First Supporting Point | These are equal
use capital letters | B. Second Supporting Point | in importance and
(A. B. C) | C. Third Supporting Point | written in parallel form

No number Concluding sentence
or letter

Of course, the number of main supporting points (A. B. C) will vary widely from paragraph to paragraph. This particular paragraph has three main supporting points; others may have only two or as many as ten or even

twenty. Also, some paragraphs may not have a concluding sentence, and in others, the topic sentence may not be the first sentence.

Model 5: Simple Paragraph Outlining

Study the simple outline below for the second paragraph on page 23. Then re-read the paragraph to see how the writer used this plan to write a well-organized paragraph that is easy to understand.

Learning to outline will improve your writing for three reasons.

- A. It will help you organize your ideas.
- B. It will help you write more quickly.
- C. It will help you improve your grammar.

For these three reasons-improved organization, speed, and grammar learning to outline is well worth the effort.

Writing Technique Questions

1. Are the three items in the support part of the outline above equivalent in value? (Are they all reasons or all examples?)
2. Are they all parallel in form? What is their form-nouns, verbs, adjectives, dependent clauses, or complete sentences?
3. Suggest shorter ways to write the support part of the outline.

THE "EQUIVALENT VALUE" RULE

In a formal outline, ideas that have the same kind of letter or number must have equal value. This means that every capital letter must be equal in value, and every idea given a small letter or Arabic numeral or Roman numeral must be equal. If, for example, your paragraph contains both reasons and examples, you should give the reasons one kind of letter or number, and examples another kind.

Incorrect

Topic Sentence Topic Sentence

- A. Reason A. Reason
- B. Example 1. Example
- C. Example 2. Example
- D. Reason B. Reason
- E. Example 1. Example
- F. Example 2. Example

Concluding Sentence Concluding Sentence

THE "PARALLEL FORM" RULE

Equal parts of a formal outline should be written in parallel form. This means that all ideas given the same kind of letter or number should be written in complete sentences, clauses, phrases, or single words such as adjectives, etc.

Incorrect

Rocks make excellent pets.

A. They don't eat.

B. Cleanliness.

C. Obedient.

For these three reasons, rocks make great pets.

Correct

Rocks make excellent pets.

A. They don't eat.

B. They are clean.

C. They are obedient.

For these three reasons, rocks make great pets.

In the incorrect outline above, the main supporting points are all different grammatical structures. A is a complete sentence, B is a noun, and C is an adjective. In the corrected outline, all three are complete sentences. Of course, you don't have to write complete sentences in the support part of an outline. You could write the same outline in these four ways:

1. A. Don't eat 2. A. Because they don't eat

B. Are clean B. Because they are clean.

C. Are obedient C. Because they are obedient

3. A. Economical 4. A. Economy

B. Clean B. Cleanliness

C. Obedient C. Obedience

Remember to write your outline in parallel form by using the same grammatical patterns.

Practice 7: Making Outlines Parallel

Rewrite each of these outlines to make the support part parallel in form.

1. San Francisco is famous for its tourist attractions.

A. Golden Gate Park is very famous.

B. Chinatown.

C. Fisherman's Wharf attracts hundreds of tourists.

D. Riding the cable cars.

For these four attractions alone. San Francisco is well worth a visit.

2. Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics.

A. It is beautiful.

B. Useful to science and industry.

In conclusion, gold is treasured not only for its beauty but also for its utility.

3. Some of the world's most successful men had trouble in school.

A. Albert Einstein failed his university entrance exams on his first attempt.

B. William Faulkner's F's in English.

C. Special tutoring necessary for Winston Churchill.

These few examples show that failure in school does not always predict failure in life.

Practice 8: Simple Paragraph Outlining I

Turn back to Practice 6A on page 21 and prepare a simple outline for each paragraph. Make sure that the support parts of your outlines are parallel.

Practice 9: Simple Paragraph Outlining II

Choose any three of the topic sentences below and write a simple outline for a paragraph for each of them. Follow the outline form in the model. Your supporting ideas can be reasons, examples, or simple facts.

1. Students who both work and attend school lead busy lives.

2. Technology is making people lazy.

3. Technology is making our lives easier.

4. A good doctor (teacher, scientist, businessperson, athlete) has two (three, four, five) important qualities.

5. Pollution is a growing threat to life on earth.

Review: Unity and Simple Outlining

WRITING PRACTICE

Choose one of the suggested topics listed below and write a paragraph ten to fifteen sentences in length. Be sure your paragraph is unified.

STEP 1 Write a simple outline that has all the parts (topic sentence, supporting ideas, and a concluding sentence). Make sure it is parallel in form.

STEP 2 Write your paragraph from your outline. Add enough sentences in the support part to make your main points clear.

STEP 3 Underline your topic sentence and your concluding sentence.

STEP 4 Check your paragraph against the Paragraph Checklist on page 27 before you hand in

both your outline and your paragraph.

Topic Suggestions

Choose a famous person whom you admire. Explain why you admire that person, naming several qualities that make the individual admirable. If possible, cite instances when this person displayed these qualities.

The goals you will have achieved when you are forty years old. Discuss at least three different areas (family, job, house, finances).

The living arrangement (a college dormitory, a room with an American family, an apartment with some friends, a room in your parents' home) that, in your opinion, is the best for a person in your particular situation.

Paragraph Checklist

Form: ____ Does your paragraph have a title?

____ Did you write on the correct side of the paper?

____ Did you indent?

____ Did you write on every other line?

(Refer to the Assignment Format on pages 3 for complete instructions.)

Topic Sentence: ____ Does your topic sentence contain a controlling idea?

Supporting Sentences:

Unity: ____ Do all of your sentences directly support your topic sentence?

Concluding Sentence: ____ Does your paragraph have a concluding sentence?

WRITING UNDER PRESSURE

Choose one of the topics from Practice 9 on page 26, and write a paragraph about it. Make a quick outline before you begin.

Check your paragraph against the Paragraph Checklist before you hand in both your outline and your paragraph.

Your instructor will give you a time limit. Suggested limits:

Outlining Time 3 minutes

Writing Time -10 minutes

Checking Time - 2 minutes

Total 15 minutes

Chapter 3

COHERENCE FROM TRANSITION SIGNAL

Another element of a good paragraph is coherence. Co- is a Latin prefix that means "together" or "with." The verb cohere means "hold together." In order to have coherence in writing, the movement from one sentence to the next (and in longer essays, from one paragraph to the next) must be logical and smooth. There must be no sudden jumps. Each sentence should flow smoothly into the next one. There are two main ways to achieve coherence. The first way is to use transition signals to show how one idea is related to the next. The second way to achieve coherence is to arrange your sentences in logical order.

He is my student. Mr. Arul is from Kupang.

Mr. Arul is my student. He is from Kupang.

When Mr./ is sick, he visits a doctor.

Transition Signals

Transition signals are words such as first, second, next, finally, therefore, and however, or phrases such as in conclusion, on the other hand, and as a result. Think of transition signals as traffic signs that tell your reader when to go forward, turn, slow down, and stop. In other words, tell the reader when you are giving a similar idea (similarly, moreover, furthermore, in addition), an opposite idea (on the other hand, however, in contrast), an example (for example), a result (as a result), or a conclusion (in conclusion).

Using transition words to guide your reader makes it easier to follow your ideas. Transition words give your paragraph coherence.

Practice 10: Transition Signals

Compare paragraphs 1 and 2 on page 29-30. Both paragraphs give the same information, yet one paragraph is easier to understand than the other because it contains transition signals to lead the reader from one idea to the next. Which paragraph contains transition signals and is more coherent? Circle all of the transition signals that you can identify.

Paragraph 1

Paragraph 2

Paragraph 2 is more coherent because it contains these transition signals:

Another tells you that this paragraph is part of a longer essay.

For example tells you that an example of the preceding idea is coming.

Two tells you to look for two different reasons.

First of all tells you that this is the first reason.

Second and furthermore indicate that additional ideas are coming.

Therefore and consequently indicate that the second statement is a result of the first statement. On the other hand tells you that an opposite idea is coming.

Each transition signal has a special meaning. Each one shows how the following sentence relates to the preceding one. Of course, you should not use a transition signal in front of every sentence in a paragraph. Using too many transition signals can be just as confusing as using too few. However, good writing requires that you use enough transition signals to make the relationships among your ideas clear.

Below is a chart showing some of the most common transition signals. You should learn to use all of them, for they can be used with all kinds of writing. Later on, you will learn about special transition signals that are used with certain types of writing, such as chronological order, comparison, and contrast.

salinity: salt content concentration: amount

saline: salty dilute: reduce the concentration of

evaporates: dries up

TRANSITION SIGNALS FOR GENERAL USE

Meaning/ Sentence Clause Connectors .

Function Connectors Coordinators Subordinators Others

To introduce furthermore and another (+noun)

an additional moreover an additional

idea in addition (+ noun)

To introduce on the other but although in spite of

an opposite hand yet though (+ noun)

idea however even though despite (+ noun)

in contrast whereas

while

To introduce otherwise or if

a choice or unless
alternative

To introduce for example an example of
an example for instance (noun +)
e.g.* such as(+ noun)

To introduce i.e.
a restatement
or explanation

To introduce in conclusion
a conclusion in summary
or summary to conclude
to summarize.
e.g: for example (from the Latin *exempli gratia*)

TYPES OF TRANSITION SIGNALS

Transition signals can be divided into four basic groups according to function: sentence connectors, coordinators (coordinating conjunctions), subordinators (subordinating conjunctions), prepositions and determiners.

Sentence Connectors Examples: however, therefore, furthermore, for example, on the other hand, in addition, still, otherwise

Sentence connectors join one independent clause* with another to form a compound sentence, which is punctuated with a semicolon (;) and a comma (,).

Independent clause: subject + verb + complement

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE: SENTENCE CONNECTOR, INDEPENDENT CLAUSE.

I dislike mushrooms; therefore, I never eat them.

Mushrooms are good for you; however, I never eat them.

Notice that the sentence connector following the semicolon is not capitalized.

Sentence connectors may also come at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of a simple sentence. In these cases, punctuate them with commas as follows:

1. At the beginning:

Therefore, I never eat them.

On the other hand, mushrooms are good for you.

2. In the middle:

I, therefore, never eat them.

Mushrooms, on the other hand, are good for you.

If the sentence connector is one word, the commas may be omitted:

I therefore never eat them.

3. At the end:

I never eat them, therefore.

Mushrooms are good for you, on the other hand.

Coordinators Examples: and, but, yet, or, nor, for, so.

These seven coordinators join two independent clauses to form a compound sentence. Punctuate the sentence with a comma after the first clause.

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE COORDINATOR INDEPENDENT CLAUSE

Mushrooms are good for you, but I dislike them.

I dislike mushrooms, so I never eat them.

Subordinators Examples: because, after, since, as, although, if, when

Subordinators introduce a dependent clause* that is joined to an independent clause to form a complex sentence. There are two positions for the dependent clause:

1. If the dependent clause comes before the independent clause, use a comma after it.

DEPENDENT CLAUSE INDEPENDENT CLAUSE.

Although mushrooms are good for you, I dislike them.

Because I dislike mushrooms, I never eat them.

2. If the dependent clause comes after the independent clause, do not use a comma.

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE DEPENDENT CLAUSE.

I dislike mushrooms although they are good for you.

I never eat mushrooms because I dislike them.

Prepositions and Determiners Examples: because of, due to, in spite of (prepositions) another, additional, final (determiners)

This group of transition signals has no special rules for punctuation.

I dislike mushrooms because of a bad experience I once had.

Another reason I dislike mushrooms is their rubbery consistency.

Practice 11: Recognizing Transition Signals

STEP 1 Circle all of the transition signals in the following paragraphs. There are at least ten in each.

STEP 2 Punctuate the transition signals if necessary.

dependent clause: subordinator + subject + verb + complement

Paragraph 1

Paragraph 2

genetic: from gene, the unit of heredity epidemic: rapidly spreading disease

gene splicing. gene joining controversy: disagreement

insulin: a substance needed by people who women's lib: abbreviation for the women's

have diabetes liberation movement

Practice 12: Choosing Transition Signals

STEP 1 Choose the transition signal that best shows the relationship between the sentences in each group from the choices given in parentheses. Write the signal in the space.

STEP 2 Add punctuation and change capital letters to small letters if necessary.

Note: All of the transition signals in this practice are sentence connectors. This is to give you more practice in using and punctuating this type of transition signal correctly.

Example A recent article in Era magazine suggested ways to reduce inflation. The article suggested that the president reduce the federal budget. Furthermore, it suggested that the government reduce federal, state and local taxes. (however, in contrast, furthermore)

1. The same article said that the causes of inflation were easy to find. However _____ the cure for inflation was not so easy to prescribe. (however, for example, therefore)

2. Era also suggested that rising wages were one of the primary causes of inflation; _____ the government should take action to control wages. (however, therefore, for example)

3. In physics, the weight of an object is the gravitational force* with which the Earth attracts it. For example, _____ if a man weighs 150 pounds, this means that the Earth pulls him down with a force of 150 pounds. (moreover, therefore, for example)

4. The farther away from Earth a person is, the less the gravitational force of the Earth_____ a man weighs less when he is 50,000 miles from Earth than when he is only 5,000 miles away. (in conclusion, therefore, however)

5. A "tsunami" is a tidal wave produced by an earthquake on the ocean floor. The waves are very long and low in open water, but when they get close to land, they encounter friction because of the shallow water_____ the waves increase in height and can cause considerable damage when they finally reach land. (on the other hand, as a result, in conclusion)

Gravitational force: the force that pulls things toward the earth friction: resistance

Review: Coherence from Transition Signals

WRITING PRACTICE

Choose one of the topics below and write one paragraph about it. Use transition signals in appropriate places.

STEP 1 Write a brief outline with a topic sentence, supporting points, and a concluding sentence.

STEP 2 Decide where transition signals would be appropriate to connect your supporting points and conclusion, and write them in the margin at the left of your outline.

STEP 3 Write your paragraph. Circle your transition words.

STEP 4 Check your paragraph against the Paragraph Checklist on the next page.

Topic Suggestions

Space exploration.

A current fad or fashion.

Movies.

The drug-abuse problem.

Test-tube babies.

Paragraph Checklist

Form: ___ Does your paragraph have a title?

___ Did you write on the correct side of the paper?

___ Did you indent?

___ Did you write on every other line?

(Refer to the Assignment Format on pages 3 for complete instructions.)

Topic Sentence: ___ Does your topic sentence contain a controlling idea?

Supporting Sentences:

Unity: ___ Do all of your sentences support your topic sentence?

Coherence-- ____ Do you use transition signals at appropriate points to make your
Transitions sentences flow smoothly?

Concluding Sentence: ____ Does your paragraph have a concluding sentence?

WRITING UNDER PRESSURE

Choose one of the topic sentences below and write a paragraph that develops it. Use transition signals to connect the supporting sentences smoothly. You may use the transition signals suggested for each topic, or you may use others not listed. Make a quick outline before you begin.

1. Foreign travel is very educational.

The first reason

Another reason

In addition

Consequently

2. Last week, I witnessed a terrible accident.

First

After that

Next

Finally

3. Being an identical twin can be a lot of fun.

For example

Furthermore

As a result

In conclusion

4. Some people enjoy solitude.

As an example

Moreover

On the other hand

Therefore

Check your paragraph against the Paragraph Checklist before you hand in both your outline and your paragraph. Your instructor will give you a time limit.

Suggested limits;

Outlining Time -3 minutes

Writing Time -10 minutes

Checking Time - 2 minutes

Chapter 4

COHERENCE FROM LOGICAL ORDER

In addition to using transition signals, a second way to achieve coherence is to arrange your sentences in some kind of logical order. Since there are different kinds of logical relationships, there are different ways to organize the ideas and sentences in a paragraph. Your choice of one kind of logical order over another will, of course, depend on your topic and on your purpose. You may even combine two or more different logical orders in the same paragraph. The important point to remember is to arrange your ideas in some kind of order that is logical to a reader accustomed to the English way of writing. The two most common kinds of logical order in English rhetoric are chronological order and order of importance.

Chronological Order

Chronological order is one of the easiest methods of organization to master. Chronos is a Greek word meaning time. Chronological order, therefore, is a way of organizing the ideas in a paragraph in the order of their occurrence in time.

Chronological order is used for something as simple as a recipe and for something as complex as a history book. In academic writing, chronological order has many uses. One of the primary ways you might use it is to write a historical review of the subject of a term paper. For example, you might review the history of labor unions before you discuss the current situation.

However, chronological order is not just used for historical events; it is also used in business, science and engineering to explain processes and procedures. For example, chronological order would be used to explain how to solve a math problem, how to perform a chemistry experiment, or how to set up an accounting system. Such paragraphs are called "how to" or "process" paragraphs.

Here are some typical test questions and/or term paper topics for which you could use chronological order as a method of organization:

Economics Trace the growth of labor unions in the United States since 1900.

Business Describe the procedure for taking a year-end inventory in a small retail business.

Chemical Engineering Describe the process of desalinization*.

Biochemistry Discuss the function of the enzyme* pepsin in the digestion of food.

There are two keys to writing a good chronological paragraph:

1. Discuss the events (in a history) or the steps (in a process) in the order in which they occur.

2. Use chronological transition signals to indicate the sequence of events or steps.

Analyze the following model paragraphs for their organization by time. Circle any words or expressions that indicate time order (first, next, after that, in 1971, etc.). The first paragraph reviews very briefly the history of computers. The second paragraph is an example of a process paragraph. It tells how to perform part of a simple chemistry experiment.

Model 6: Chronological Order

The Evolution* of Computers

A Neutralization Experiment

desalinization: removal of salt from sea water litmus paper: a treated paper used to test

enzymes: protein substances vital to cell acidity and alkalinity

metabolism sputtering: spitting out of small particles

evolution: development water vapor: steam

casserole: baking dish expelled: given off

residue: remaining solid matter

Writing Technique Questions

1. What are the two uses of chronological order that the two model paragraphs exemplify?
2. What are the main time divisions in the paragraph about computers? How would you outline it?
3. What transition signals and time expressions are used in the first paragraph to show chronological order? Circle them.
4. What transition signals and time expressions are used in the second paragraph to show the steps in the process? Circle them.
5. What verb forms are used in the second paragraph? Why?

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER: TRANSITION SIGNALS

Transition signals are especially important in a chronological paragraph. You have to be very clear about the sequence of events: did one event happen before, at the same time as, or after another event?

Some of the most common chronological transition signals are given in the chart below. Keep in mind, however, that any time expression can serve as a chronological transition signal. Such expressions as in 1948, or since the war, or twenty-five years later can all be used to signal the time order.

TRANSITION SIGNALS FOR CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

Sentence Clause Connectors_____

Connectors Coordinators Subordinators Others

first (second, third, before first (+ noun)

fourth, etc.) after the second (+ noun)

next, last, finally while before the (+ noun)
first of all until in the year
after that as soon as since the (+ noun)
since then

Practice 13: Chronological Transition Signal

Add appropriate chronological transition signals to the following essay and punctuate them. Consult the list in the preceding table or use others with which you are familiar.

How to Reduce the Danger of Smoking

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER: TOPIC SENTENCES

Notice that the topic sentence of a chronological paragraph in some way indicates the time order. In paragraphs such as the one on computers, phrases such as the development of, the growth of, or the evolution of give the reader a hint that this is a chronological paragraph.

In a "how to" or process paragraph, such as the one on page 39 about the chemistry experiment, the process to be described is named in the topic sentence. Again, this is a hint to the reader to expect a chronological paragraph.

'DHEW Publication No. (CDC) 78-8705, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978, 0-252-573.

substances: materials outright: all at once

Practice 14: Chronological Topic Sentences

STEP 1 Put a check in the space to the left of every topic sentence suggesting that a chronological paragraph will follow.

STEP 2 Underline the word or words in the sentences you have checked that indicate chronological order.

Example V In the past twenty-five years, developments in the field of electronics have revolutionized the computer industry.

- 1. The worst day in my life was the day I left my family and my friends to come to the United States.
- 2. In my opinion, television programs can be divided into three types: excellent, mediocre, and poor.
- 3. The life cycle of the Pacific salmon* is one of nature's most fascinating phenomena*.

- ___ 4. Gold is prized for two important characteristics.
- ___ 5. In the event of an earthquake, you should follow certain procedures in order to minimize the danger.
- ___ 6. The tensions* that led to the race riots of 1964 had been building for years.
- ___ 7. The election of a U.S. President is a very long and complex process.
- ___ 8. Smoking damages not only your lungs, but also your heart.
- ___ 9. There are three reasons I believe that women should be drafted* along with men.
- ___ 10. The rise of terrorist groups in the past few years is an indication of the spread of anarchistic* tendencies in the world.

salmon: a kind of fish drafted: called into military service

phenomena: things or events anarchistic: total absence of government

tension: stresses

OUTLINING A CHRONOLOGICAL PARAGRAPH

Writing an outline for a chronological order paragraph is very easy. Follow these steps:

STEP 1 Write a topic sentence that indicates chronological order by naming the event or the process you will explain.

STEP 2 List the events or steps in the order in which they occur or occurred.

STEP 3 Add transition signals to mark the most important points in the time sequence.

STEP 4 Write a concluding sentence if one is necessary.

Model 7: Outline for a Chronological Paragraph

Study the following outline for the model paragraph about computers from *The Evolution of Computers* page 39.

The Evolution of Computers

Transition In the relatively short span of twenty-five years, there has been an

Signals incredible evolution in the size and capabilities of computers.

(Around 1945) A. First computers were so large that they required special air-conditioned rooms.

(In the 1960s) B. Desk-sized computers were developed.

(Twenty years later)

(Before the end of C. A third generation of computers using simple integrated circuits that same decade) appeared.

(In 1971) D. Microprocessors less than one square centimeter in size were developed.

(Today) E. Even smaller and more sophisticated computers will be on the market soon.

Practice 15: Outlining a Chronological Paragraph

Outline the paragraph, "How to Reduce the Danger of Smoking" on page 41. Include only the topic sentence, the six main steps, and the concluding sentence in your outline: do not write every sentence. Underline the topic and concluding sentences.

Put the transition signals that you added in parentheses to the left of each supporting point, as in the example above.

WRITING A CHRONOLOGICAL PARAGRAPH

To write a chronological paragraph, whether it is a history or a process:

1. Make a simple outline that lists the events (in a history) or the steps (in a process) in the order of their occurrence.
2. Add transition signals at appropriate points in the left margin of your outline.
3. Write a topic sentence that names the event or the process.
4. Write the paragraph, following your outline. Add enough details to make the chain of events or steps in the process very clear.

WRITING PRACTICE

STEP 1 Choose a topic from the suggestions listed below.

STEP 2 Write an outline, listing the main steps or main events that you will explain in your paragraph.

STEP 3 Add chronological transition signals at appropriate points in the left margin of your outline.

STEP 4. Write your paragraph from your outline.

Topic Suggestions

A. Process Topics

How to study for a test, take a test, or find a book in the library.

How to cure the hiccoughs, a hangover, "the blues," "the blahs*"

How to jump-start a car, wash and wax a car, change a tire.

How to put on makeup, put in contact lenses.

How to make a perfect cup of coffee, cup of tea, dry martini.

“the blahs”: don’t care attitude

B. Historical Topics

Use some or all of the following data to write a brief history of manned space flights.

MANNED SPACE FLIGHTS

Crew/Date of Mission	Mission Name	Comment
Yuri Gagarin April 12, 1961	Vostok 1	First manned orbital* flight
John Glenn, Jr. February 20, 1962	Mercury-Atlas 6	First American in orbit
Aleksei Leonov March 18, 1965 (10 minutes)	Voskhod 2	First “space walk”
4 Russian cosmonauts January, 1969	Soyuz 4 and Soyuz 5	First transfer of crew members from one spacecraft to another
3 U.S. astronauts July 20, 1969	Apollo-Saturn 11	First landing on the moon.
2 Russian cosmonauts and July, 1975	Soyuz 19	U.S.-U.S.S.R. joint flight. conducted experiments. And shared meals.
3 U.S. astronauts April 12-15, 1981	Apollo 18	Crews linked up in space.
John Young and Robert Crippen April 12-15, 1981	Space Shuttle Columbia	First flight of a reusable space vehicle

Orbital: in a circle around the earth

Order of Importance

Another very common way to organize the ideas in a paragraph is to discuss them in the order of their importance. There are two ways to do this: you can discuss the most important point first and work down to the least important point, or you can begin with the least important and end your paragraph with the most important. The way you choose will depend on your topic and on your purpose; both ways can be effective.

You can use order of importance for all kinds of topics. Suppose, for example, you were asked on a history test to give the causes of the U.S. Civil War. There were three basic causes: the economic superiority of the northern states, the slavery issue, and the political question of the right of individual states to secede* from the United States and form a separate country. Which cause would you discuss first, and which last? It would depend on your point of view: do you want to emphasize economics, politics, or the slavery issue?

To use another example, suppose you were asked to write about the two most important influences on your life besides your family, and you chose to write about a particular teacher who had a big influence on you or perhaps a dramatic incident in your life that somehow changed you. Here, again, you would discuss the two influences in the order of their importance-how strongly each affected you.

Just as with chronological order it is important to use transition signals to guide your reader from one point to the next.

There are two keys to writing an effective paragraph using order of importance as a method of organization:

1. Discuss your points in the order of their importance, discussing the most important point either first or last.
2. Use order of importance transition signals to guide your reader from one point to the next and to indicate your most important points.

Secede: separate

Model 8: Order of Importance

The Causes of Inflation

Writing Technique Questions

What are the three main causes of inflation? In what order are they discussed? Why do you think the author used this order? Would the paragraph be more effective if government spending were discussed last?

If you had written this paragraph, would you have discussed the points in a different order? If so, how would you have done it? Why?

ORDER OF IMPORTANCE: TRANSITION SIGNALS

Notice that many of the transition signals for order of importance are the same as the transition signals for chronological order.

TRANSITION SIGNALS FOR ORDER OF IMPORTANCE

Sentence Connectors Others

First, second, third, etc. the first (+ noun)

next, last, finally the second (+ noun)

above all the most important (+ noun)

more important, most important

Practice 16: Transition Signals for Order of Importance

Reread the model paragraph for order of importance and draw a circle around all the transition signals. If you find any that are not in the table, add them.

ORDER OF IMPORTANCE: TOPIC SENTENCES

Notice the topic sentence for the model paragraph on the causes of inflation:

There are three important causes of inflation.

Because this topic sentence mentions that there are several sources, a reader who is accustomed to the English way of writing will usually assume that the sources will be discussed in the order of their importance. Sometimes the topic sentence actually names the subtopics:

In the United States, the vacuum cleaner, World War II, and the birth control pill were the three main factors that contributed to the liberation of women in the twentieth century.

And sometimes, the topic sentence specifically shows the order of importance:

In the United States, the two most important holidays are first, Christmas, and second, Thanksgiving.

Practice 17: Topic Sentences for Order of Importance

STEP 1 Put a check in the space to the left of every topic sentence that suggests order of importance organization.

STEP 2 Underline the word or words in the checked sentences which indicate this.

Example _V_ A political leader today must possess four important qualities

- ___ 1. My twenty-first birthday was a day I will never forget.
- ___ 2. In terms of salary, power, and status, women are behind men in most as occupations.
- ___ 3. Some meteorologists* believe that another ice age is approaching.
- ___ 4. Living in a dormitory offers three advantages to a newly arrived foreign student.

___ 5. Photosynthesis is the process by which plants manufacture their own food.

Meteorologist: a specialist in weather and climatic conditions

ORDER OF IMPORTANCE: OUTLINING

An outline for an order of importance paragraph follows one of the two following forms:

Topic Sentence

(Transition) A. The most important point (reason, factor, example, etc.) is...

(Transition) B. Next point

(Transition) C. Next point

(Transition) D. Final point

Concluding Sentence

If you decide that it is more effective to discuss your most important point last, your outline will look like this:

Topic Sentence

(Transition) A. First point

(Transition) B. Next point

(Transition) C. The most important point (reason, factor, example, etc.) is...

Concluding Sentence

Practice 18: Outlining for Order of Importance

A. Write a simple outline for the Model 8 paragraph, "The Causes of Inflation," on page 47. In the left margin, note the transition signals used, following the Model 7 outlining example on page 43.

B. Write a simple outline for any two of the following topics. Follow the same directions as for A. above.

1. The problems of a foreign student in the United States.
2. The qualities of a good teacher (student, wife, husband, friend).
3. The most important holidays in your country.
4. Important inventions in the twentieth century.
5. Important discoveries in the field of medicine.
6. Important developments in your major field.
7. Important influences on your life (people or events or both).

(Note: For 4, 5, and 6, you may want to get information from the library.)

WRITING PRACTICE

Choose one of the topics below and write one or more paragraphs about it. If you write more than one paragraph, make sure that each paragraph division is logical and that each paragraph has a topic sentence. Pay particular attention to making your paragraph(s) coherent.

STEP 1 Decide which method of organization (chronological order or order of importance) best suits your topic.

STEP 2 Write an outline.

STEP 3 Write your paragraph or paragraphs.

STEP 4 Underline all topic and concluding sentences, and circle all of your transition signals.

STEP 5 Check your paragraph(s) against the Paragraph Checklist on page 45 before you hand in your paper.

Topic Suggestions

The traditional celebration of New Year's Day (or another important day) in your country.

The important milestones* in a person's life in your culture. Give reasons why they are important.

Your autobiography, or the biography of a famous person from your country.

The reasons for choosing your particular major field. If you have not yet chosen a major, you may write about one of the choices you are considering.

Any of the topics in Practice 18-B on pages 49.

milestone: important date or event

Paragraph Checklist

Form: ____ Does your paragraph have a title?

____ Did you write on the correct side of the paper?

____ Did you indent the first line?

____ Did you write on every other line?

(Refer to the Assignment Format on pages 3 for complete instructions.)

Topic Sentence: ____ Does your topic sentence contain a controlling idea?

Supporting Sentences:

Unity: ____ Do all of your sentences support your topic sentence?

Coherence-- ____ Do you use transition signals at appropriate points to make your

Transition Signals: sentences flow smoothly?

Coherence— ____ Are your ideas arranged in logical order?

Logical Order:

Concluding Sentence: ____ Does your paragraph have a concluding sentence?

WRITING UNDER PRESSURE

Choose a topic from either Group A or Group B below and write a paragraph on that subject. Write a simple outline before you begin, using either chronological order or order of importance.

Group A-Order of Importance Group B-Chronological Order

Why it is important to: ____ The happiest day in your life.

- a. ____ learn English. The unhappiest day in your life.
- b. ____ get a college education. A typical day in your life.
- c. ____ own an automobile. A perfect day in your "ideal" life.
- d. ____ earn a lot of money.
- e. ____ conserve energy.
- f. ____ reduce pollution.
- g. ____ stop smoking.

Check your paragraph against the Paragraph Checklist before you hand it in. Your instructor will give you a time limit. Suggested limits:

Outlining Time - 3 minutes

Writing Time -10 minutes

Checking Time - 2 minutes

Total 15 minutes