

ENGLISH

Grammar: Paragraph Writing



PARAGRAPH WRITING

What is a Paragraph?

A **paragraph** is a short collection of well-organised sentences which revolve around a single theme and is coherent.

Parts of a Paragraph

- **Introduction:** It constitutes the opening sentences of the paragraph. It introduces the main idea. Good introductions often capture the interest of the reader.
- **Body (Supporting Sentences):** It constitutes the supporting sentences and ideas. It provides the reader with additional details about the main idea.
- **Conclusion:** It ties up loose ends of the paragraph and helps in reiterating or highlighting the main idea.

Characteristics of a Well-written Paragraph

- **Concise:** A good paragraph expresses everything it has to say briefly.
- **Unified:** A paragraph revolves around a single idea. The first line of the paragraph often gives the main idea. All the other details support the main idea of the passage.
- **Sequenced:** The sentences of the paragraph cannot be written haphazardly. The ideas progress in a sequential order.
- **Coherent:** The sentences in the paragraph do not function independently. They are well-connected to be readable. If a paragraph is not coherent, then it may sound illogical or clumsy to the reader.
- **Complete:** A complete paragraph expresses everything without leaving any gaps as far as the information is concerned. It does not end abruptly without offering a sensible conclusion.

Example:

A Rolling Stone Gathers No Moss

Moss grows on surfaces that are steady, but not on ones that are moving. The proverb therefore implies that an unsteady person is like a rolling stone and moss represents achievements or responsibilities. These days, people find it tedious to stick to a single job. They move from place to place seeking excitement and novelty. In the process, they lose not only the stability and security but also the responsibility and the wisdom that comes with a steady job. Life is indeed fast paced, but flitting unsteadily from one place to the other is never the solution. It is important that we decide upon our true calling and stick to it unwaveringly in order to gain benefits from it.

- The sentences underlined in **RED** comprise the **introduction** of the paragraph. It simplifies or explains the idea given in the title for the reader.
- The sentences underlined in **PURPLE** comprise the **body** of the paragraph. It provides all the information to support the main idea of the paragraph.
- The sentences underlined in **BLUE** comprise the **conclusion** of the paragraph. It reiterates or highlights the main idea and the final opinion of the writer.
- The paragraph conveys its main ideas briefly. It is therefore **concise**.
- The entire paragraph focuses on a single idea. It therefore has unity.
- In the paragraph, the ideas in the introduction are well connected to the body of the paragraph.
- That in turn is connected to the conclusion of the paragraph. Connectives are added to connect the ideas smoothly and logically. It is therefore **sequential** and **coherent**.
- The paragraph does not end abruptly. It repeats the idea that is explained in the beginning of the paragraph. By using closing sentences such as „The proverb therefore...“, it puts emphasis on the writer's final opinion. The paragraph is therefore **complete**.
- Hence, we can say that the above paragraph is well-written.

Types of Paragraphs

- **Descriptive Paragraph:** As the name suggests, through the **Descriptive Paragraph**, the writer describes something to the reader. It may be based on what the writer has seen, heard or felt. The writer uses rich descriptions that appeals to the reader's senses. This helps the reader place himself in a world that the writer creates.
- **Narrative Paragraph:** This type of paragraph tells a story or an incident to the reader. In other words, it simply narrates a tale that is meaningful. Such paragraphs often follow a linear or a chronological order of narration.
- **Expository Paragraph:** This type of paragraph explains an instruction, a method or a process. The purpose of such a paragraph is to simply explain something to the reader. Often, the writer of such paragraphs does a lot of research on the topics he or she wishes to explain. The writer uses expository paragraphs to share the knowledge that he or she already has with the readers.

Steps to Write a Paragraph

- Step 1: Think about the idea given in the title or the prompt.
 - What type of paragraph will be appropriate?
 - What could be the main ideas?
 - How to write the introduction, the body and the conclusion?
 - Write all the ideas.
Example:
„India: The World's Biggest Democracy“
 - In this case, a descriptive paragraph would be appropriate.
 - Main ideas would include
 - a) Why India is the biggest democracy?
 - b) What are the hallmarks of Indian democracy?
 - c) India's diversity
 - d) Instances when democracy in India played a definite role
- Step 2: Structure your paragraph.
 - Do not use more than two sentences for the introduction and conclusion.
 - It is important to plan your paragraph instead of writing spontaneously.
 - Arrange the ideas in a chronological order if you are attempting a narrative paragraph.
 - Arrange them in the increasing order of importance in a descriptive, expository or persuasive paragraph.
 - Remember to conclude the paragraph.
- Step 3: Use a consistent tense form while writing the paragraph.
- Step 4: Keep in mind the „Characteristics of a Well-written Paragraph“ that we discussed at the beginning of the lesson.
- Step 5: Recheck for any grammatical errors after writing a paragraph.

A Checklist:

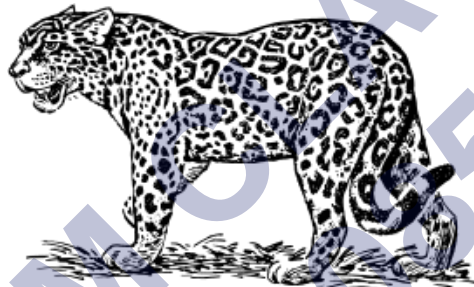
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| • Every idea in the paragraph supports a single point of view. |
| • The paragraph revolves around the topic given in the prompt. |
| • All the sentences are written in the correct order and that no sentence is out of place. |
| • There is no ambiguity in the passage. |
| • No clumsy or repetitive sentences. |
| • The main idea shines through. |
| • The idea is introduced properly. |
| • Transition words are used correctly to connect sentences. |
| • Doesn't end abruptly without a proper conclusion. |
| • Easy to read from the reader's point of view. |
| • No grammatical errors. |

Sample Paragraphs

SAMPLE 1: Descriptive Paragraph

The Jaguar in the Wild

The jaguar prowls the jungle in search of prey. It has been three weeks since he trapped a big one. Slowly, it moved through the canopy of leaves and branches to spy on a lone deer lapping water from a small pool. The deer momentarily raises its head trying to focus on the sound of leaves rustling. In one swift move, the jaguar leaps from a distance and grabs the deer by the neck. Finally, after the prey succumbs to the bite on the jugular, the jaguar gets to eat. It is not only a brutal display of Darwin's maxim of „Survival of the fittest‘ but also a testimony to the agility and strength of this fine feline. This master hunter is known for its ability to stalk the prey without getting noticed. One of the most elegant members of the Panthera family, the jaguar is also notoriously elusive. In the coming years, the scientists hope to uncover more secrets about this mysterious beast.



SAMPLE 2: Narrative Paragraph

Maude was unnaturally quiet that night opening her mouth only to ask for drink refills at the party. She was filled with a sense of foreboding; something that told her to place her drink down on the table and go home. It has been a terrible week already; she felt that she was being watched. Priscilla, the matronly manager at work, had pooh-poohed her fears saying that she was watching too much television and movies. „It's all in your head,“ she said in between coffee sips. „Maybe you are just paranoid. I feel that way all the time“. Maude was not convinced. Her sound sleep was compromised since she heard voices all night long. They were conniving voices, reproaching voices; voices that dripped with resentment, voices that angered her and frightened her at the same time.



SAMPLE 3: Expository Paragraph**Anomalous Behaviour of Water**

The anomalous behaviour of water refers to the properties of water that are different from those of other liquids. Frozen water shows anomalies or abnormalities when it is compared to other solids. Although the molecule of water is simple, it acquires an anomalous quality because of its intramolecular hydrogen bonding. Water vapour is known to be one of the lightest gases, but it is comparatively denser. As a solid, it is much lighter compared to its liquid form. These anomalies make it one of the strangest entities in Chemistry.

**SAMPLE 4: Descriptive Paragraph****Shakespeare's Macbeth**

William Shakespeare's Macbeth is a tragedy about an overambitious general who falls prey to his need to seek absolute power. It also illustrates the deep and damaging impact of crimes on the human psyche. Set in Scotland, Macbeth is a favourite of King Duncan. In the throes of his greed, Macbeth succumbs to his wife's words and brutally murders the king. He blames the crimes on his political opponents and thus succeeds in weeding them out of his way. During the course of the story, he grows insecure and fearful of retribution. He and his wife soon embark on a downward spiral as their paranoia starts bordering on madness. The play has borrowed its basic plot from Scottish legends and folklore. Today, it is regarded as one of Shakespeare's greatest works.

SAMPLE 5: Descriptive Paragraph**The Cuisine of Myanmar**

The Cuisine of Myanmar is a reflection of the country's ethnic diversity. It is characterised by the use of staples such as rice and fish products. Thanks to its geography, Myanmar's cuisine is influenced by its Chinese, Indian and Thai neighbours. In the coastal areas, the use fish and fish products is extensive, while the landlocked regions use animal products and meat in their cuisine. Like their Chinese and Japanese counterparts, the Burmese treat their food rituals with respect. They seat themselves on a bamboo mat and eat their food on a low table. The meals revolve around a main dish such as rice or noodles. Side dishes comprising fish or poultry products are served alongside the main dish. Spicy and sour vegetables are also served as accompaniments. The elders are always served first as a mark of respect. In their absence, morsels of food are first kept aside for them. The others are served only after this ritual. Like the Japanese, food is eaten with the help of a pair of chopsticks. Some also scoop their food with their hands and roll it into morsel-sized balls before consuming them. Burmese cuisine reflects not only its culture but also its history and geography.

SAMPLE 6: Narrative Paragraph**Inside KC 19, Kavi Nagar**

Krish, Tarun and I always wandered around the infamous KC 19 in Kavi Nagar. It was a two-storeyed house that was infamous for its violent past. The house was also a hotbed of supernatural activities. The three of us wanted to find what evil forces lurked within the walls of the house. So we made a plan to break into it at night to investigate its so-called paranormal activities. At night, we broke into the premises and walked through its badly-maintained garden. The moonlight was casting strange shadows on the walls of the house. We would get startled by the slightest of sounds at every step. After spending a good 15 minutes investigating the place, we were convinced that the stories of ghosts and eerie laughing sounds were unfounded. Half disappointed and half relieved that there were no poltergeists in KC 19, we walked towards the door. Just then, a red ball dropped down from the mezzanine. It was followed by what sounded like the giggle of a child. We made a dash for the main gate not stopping till we reached our respective houses. We never spoke about that incident to each other for a long time, and we vowed never to go to KC 19 again.

SAMPLE 7: Narrative Paragraph**The Dhruva Star**

King Uttanapada had two wives—the mild-mannered Suniti and the sharp-tongued Suruchi. Prince Dhruva was born to the eldest queen Suniti. The young prince idolised his father and was in awe of him. One day, when the king was sitting on his throne, Dhruva insisted on sitting with him. The king picked him up and placed him on his lap. Suruchi who was jealous of the son of her rival pulled the young prince down. When the prince objected, she chided him by saying, “Let God tell you where you are supposed to sit!”. To the impressionable mind of the child, this seemed like a conundrum that had to be solved. Wanting to know his rightful place in the universe, the prince undertook a very rigorous penance. He abstained from food and water for six months and mediated by fixing the image of Lord Vishnu in his inner eye. The lord decided to appear in front of the prince since he was pleased with his devotion. Along with gifting him the power of stuti, he was also granted his rightful place in the universe. Lord Vishnu stated that he would be given a place from where no one can remove him. His special position would make him immune to any kind of cataclysm including the Great Flood. He attained the state of Dhruvapada where he became the celestial body Dhruva Nakshatra or the Pole star.

SAMPLE 8: Expository Paragraph**How is the Prime Minister of India Elected**

The role of the Indian Prime Minister is a prestigious one. He or she becomes the head of the world's largest democracy. By the virtue of this fact, the onus of governing India is a huge one. The procedure for electing the Prime Minister is very systematic. According to the Indian Constitution, the President of the nation has the authority to appoint the leader of the party which is in the majority; alternatively, if there is a coalition of many parties who have come together to form an alliance, the leader of the largest party becomes eligible for the post of the Prime Minister. For this, he or she has to win the confidence vote in the Lower House of the Parliament. The candidate can be a member of the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha. If he is a member of neither, he has to be immediately elected to either of the houses within six months of his appointment. The Prime Minister becomes the leader of the house of which he is a member.

SAMPLE 9: Expository Paragraph

The Three Minds

Although the human mind does not have a physical manifestation, we equate it with the thoughts and feelings the brain creates. It is the most mystifying concepts of human metaphysics. The human mind is divided into three parts—the conscious, the subconscious and the unconscious. The conscious mind causes awareness of the self and of the present moment. It helps us respond to our surroundings and perform any action with full awareness. The subconscious mind is a deeper realm of the mind where every action, memory and feeling gathered over the course of one's life is stored. One can access those pieces of information if one focuses on retrieving them. The subconscious has tremendous potential. It has the power to heal the body of any disease and can help one overcome mental barriers. The unconscious lay deeper within the mind. It consists of instincts and impulses that are primitive in nature. It drives our present behaviour, but it is practically inaccessible. It is very difficult to retrieve the information that lay embedded in our unconscious.

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