

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 it away. 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:

The Hand that Rocks the Cradle Rules the World

The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand of the mother. The proverb implies that mothers are the ones who rule the world in a figurative sense. A mother is the greatest influence in the life of a child. She is the one who knows her offspring the longest. Her role is not only a biological one but also a spiritual one. The formative years of a child are the ones that shape his or her personality. The role that the mother plays could mould the child into an Einstein or a Stalin. In her nimble hands she holds the staff of power and responsibility. It is undeniable that the hand of the mother rules the world.



- 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 like „not only...but also...” 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 „It is undeniable...” 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 appeal to the reader’s senses. This helps the reader place himself in a world that the writer creates.

Sample 1

The Clown

Dumbo the Clown is an entertainer who often acts foolish for the amusement of the audience. He commonly wears colourful clothes, decorates his face with garish makeup, sports outlandish wigs and wears oversized shoes. His aim is to entertain large crowds at the circus. Traditionally, Dumbo is known to follow stuntmen and unsuccessfully mimic their actions. His failure to replicate complicated circus moves makes him look foolish and hilarity ensues. Once, he followed a trapeze artist all the way to the top and attempted a heroic jump. Although he intended to grab onto a swing, his short stature caused him to miss the mark by a few feet. He came tumbling down into the net causing the audience to roar with laughter.



- **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.

Sample 2

An Evening at the Beach

Yesterday, Aryan and I decided to take a stroll by the beach. The air was cool and the sun turned the skies rosy. We rode our bicycles along the boulevard enjoying the soft caress of the evening wind on our faces. After parking our bikes, we walked barefooted to the waterfront. The sun was now a big red dot on the forehead of the horizon. I closed my eyes and inhaled the salty scent of the sea breeze. The sound of the crashing waves reverberated in the evening air. My feet were being incessantly washed by the waves. At a distance, the distinct chattering of vendors could be heard. My friend and I sat in silence enjoying the last few minutes of the retreating twilight. The evening now constitutes one of the most sublime moments of my life.

- **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.

Sample 3

How to Make a Nutritious Multigrain Sandwich

Take two slices of multigrain bread and apply white butter on each side. Season the buttered sides with salt and pepper. Cut tomatoes, cucumbers, onions and boiled potatoes into rings and set aside. Prepare a fine paste out of mint leaves, coriander leaves, salt, green chillies and lemon juice. Slather this paste on the buttered sides of the bread. Now neatly arrange the vegetables on the bread slices and season it with salt. A dollop of mustard paste and tomato ketchup can be added to make the sandwich more flavourful. Coat the insides of the toaster with white butter and place the sandwich inside. Toast it for two minutes. Serve hot. This recipe serves one.



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.
 - Plan your paragraph before instead of writing spontaneously.
 - Arrange the ideas in a chronological order in a narrative paragraph.
 - Arrange them in the increasing order of importance in a descriptive or expository 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:

- 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.

Samples

Descriptive Paragraphs

Sample 4

A Snowy Night

A bird perched on the branch of a hickory tree observed the village on a cold, snowy night. The wind blew gently caressing the tree tops and the window panes. It caused the children out for a nightly stroll to pull their caps over their ears and their shawls to their faces. Worried people closed the open windows to not let the cool breeze snuff out the fireplace. A small brook that usually flowed to meet the river in the east had now frozen completely. Little children at had painstakingly built a snowman. Young Susie had procured a big, fat carrot for the snowman's nose. Her brother Philip was making angels in the snow. Their mother was beckoning them inside for supper.



Sample 5

The Mustang

The mustang is an American horse that is feral by nature. Categorised as a wild horse, the mustang represents the freedom of the Wild West. As a mark of their kind, the mustang possesses 17 ribs and 5 lumbar vertebrae. The body of the animal is smooth, sinewy and well-proportioned. Its head is held high and is characterised by a tapering muzzle. The shoulder of the animal is sloping and its neck is crested. The legs are sturdy and strong; its hindquarters are muscular. Its tail is lush and low set. The hooves of the mustang are wide to balance its body weight. Each of its physical traits reflects its royal Spanish ancestry.



Narrative Paragraphs

Sample 6

A Strange Day

I will never forget the 5th of June 2015. It was a day that started like any other. But as the day progressed, I experienced some of the strangest things ever. I woke up to the sounds of clapping thunder and rains. Oddly, it was perfectly sunny the day before and nobody was expecting such a heavy thunderstorm. I went to the kitchen to prepare a cup of tea and there were no tea leaves or tea bags left in the tin. I boiled some water with a few herbs and sipped silently. Suddenly, the doorbell rang and it startled me. When I opened the door, I saw a man drenched in the rain standing with a box in his hand. Expecting him to be a courier boy, I offered him some loose change as a tip. I noticed he wasn't wearing a uniform but a dark-coloured shirt over jeans. He refused the money saying, "I think you are mistaking me for somebody else." After saying those words, the man disappeared into the heavy rain. I shook the box and heard a low rattling sound. I opened it and was stunned to find a tiny box inside it. Inside I found a little note that said, "Call us at the number given below if you want to know your future..."

Sample 7

The First Time I Baked a Cake

I was always intrigued by my mother's electric oven and wanted to try my hand at baking something. But given my clumsy nature, my mother always forbade me from using it. "Learn to tie your shoelaces first!" she would say. One day after a lot of convincing, my mother decided to let me try the oven once. If I did well, I could use it whenever I pleased. I brought out my recipe book that I had been saving all these days for such a moment. I turned the pages to the 'Mincemeat Pie' recipe. Step-by-step, I followed the instructions. Without missing a single ingredient, I crafted the pie, put it in the oven and baked for a full 45 minutes. A strange smell wafted through the house and I was worried. It cannot be; I had followed the recipe to the t. My sister gave me an incredulous look and already started making excuses to skip supper. My mother and father were left with no choice but to taste what I had made. They both took small spoonfuls of the pie and tasted cautiously. My mother winced and made a strange face, while my father dashed to the sink to spit the morsel out. My mother asked me, "Sweetheart, what recipe was it?" I said, "Mincemeat Pie!" with an indignant tone. "Did you put minced meat into this?" she asked me. "Of course! That's what the recipe read!" I bellowed. My mother calmly explained, "Sweetheart, mincemeat is a term for nuts and fruits, not actual meat. You have added sugar and meat in the same recipe." I was dumbfounded. Rest assured I never got to use the oven or the recipe book again.



Expository Paragraphs

Sample 8

How Pearls are Made

Pearls are one of the most sought after items of jewellery. Unlike other precious jewels, pearls are neither excavated nor derived from underground. Instead, they are harvested from living creatures known as oysters. It is a result of the biological process of these creatures. The oysters' bodies are made of two valves or two halves. A ligament holds these valves together. Sometimes, when a grain of sand or a foreign object gets inside the oyster's shell, it reacts to it by coating it with a substance similar to its shell. By doing so, the oyster protects itself from the foreign body. It keeps covering it with the same substance known as nacre and in the end, a pearl is formed. Some pearls turn out to be perfectly rounded, while the others do not. The uneven pearls are known as Baroque pearls.

Sample 9

Why Is Sugar Bad?

Sugar is something everyone loves. Without which, cakes, chocolates, pastries and fizzy drinks would not be the same. It delights us by lifting our mood. People young and old are often addicted to its taste and those who are diabetic have a hard time resisting anything sugar laden. However, experts will warn you about the deleterious effect it will have on your health. Sugar has always had a bad reputation when it came to dental health. Dentists have always encouraged children and adults to brush thoroughly after enjoying a sugary treat. This is because sugar erodes the tough enamel of the teeth and causes cavities. They contain no nutritional value and can only supply the body with energy. If the sugar is not converted to energy immediately, the body converts it into fat and stores it in the body for future use. This contributes towards obesity. Excessive sugar like fructose tires the liver affecting its smooth functioning. In conclusion, apart from pampering the taste buds, sugar has nothing much to offer health wise.

