

1. WHAT IS A PARAGRAPH?

A paragraph is a group of sentences that develops one main idea. A paragraph may stand by itself as a complete piece of writing, or it may be a section of a longer piece of writing, such as an essay.

A paragraph is a group of sentences about a single *topic*. Together, the sentences of the paragraph explain the writer's main idea (most important idea) about the topic. In academic writing, a paragraph is often between five and ten sentences long, but it can be longer or shorter, depending on the topic. The first sentence of a paragraph is usually indented (moved in) a few spaces.

1.1. PARAGRAPH ORGANIZATION

What makes a paragraph?

A paragraph has three basic parts:

1. The topic sentence.

This is the main idea of the paragraph. It is usually the first sentence of the paragraph, and it is the most general sentence of the paragraph.

2. The supporting sentences.

These are sentences that talk about or explain the topic sentence. They are more detailed ideas that follow the topic sentence.

3. The concluding sentence.

This may be found as the last sentence of a paragraph. It can finish a paragraph by repeating the main idea **or** just giving a final comment about the topic.

1.1.1. THE TOPIC AND THE MAIN IDEA

1.1.1.1. THE TOPIC SENTENCE

A topic sentence states the main idea of a paragraph. It is the most general sentence of the paragraph. All the other sentences serve to explain, describe, extend, or support this main-idea sentence.

- Usually comes first in a paragraph.
- Gives the writer's main idea or opinion about the topic and helps the reader understand what the paragraph is going to talk about.
- Topic sentence = topic + main/controlling idea

Circle the topic of the sentence.

Underline the controlling idea about the topic.

- Switzerland is very interesting country to visit.
- Dogs make excellent pets.
- A really good place to study is the library at my school.

- d. Learning a foreign language creates job opportunities.
- e. Football is my favorite sport because it is exciting to watch.
- f. One of the most valuable tools for students is the computer.
- g. My sister and I have very different personalities.
- h. Summer is the best time to travel in my country.
- i. My hometown is a friendly place to live.

For each of these paragraphs, choose the sentence from the list below that would make the best topic sentence.

.....When Ken wanted to enter a good university, he studied hard to pass the examination. The first time he took the exam, he did not do well, and he felt very discouraged. But he knew he wanted to study at that university, so he studied more. The next year, he tried taking the exam again. The second time, he did very well, and now he is studying engineering. I believe Ken is a good role model for me, and he has taught me that never giving up is the best way to succeed.

- 1. *One of my closest friends, named Ken, is a person I can trust.*
- 2. *My friend Ken is a very successful student.*
- 3. *I admire my friend Ken because he doesn't give up.*

.....Many children begin learning to play football when they are very young. You can often see them playing at school or in the streets around their houses. At secondary school, students may play football in a team and compete in championships. If a player is very good, he might go on to play for a professional team. People in my country love watching football on television and also go to matches whenever they can. Many people have a favorite team or player, and everyone loves to talk about matches and competitions. Football is really like a national sport in my country

- 1. *I love playing football, and I hope I can become a professional player one day.*
- 2. *There are many popular sports in my country, but the most popular sport is football.*
- 3. *Football is a difficult sport to learn to play well.*

1.1.1.2. FINDING THE TOPIC SENTENCE OF A PARAGRAPH

Each of the following paragraphs contains a topic sentence that states the main idea of the paragraph. Find the sentence that best states the main idea and underline it. Keep in mind that the topic sentence will not always be the first sentence of the paragraph.

1

Mountains of disposable diapers are thrown into garbage cans every day. Tons of yogurt containers, soda cans, and other plastic items are discarded without so much as a stomp to flatten them out. If the old Chevy is not worth fixing, tow it off to sit with thousands of others on acres of fenced-in junkyards. Radios, televisions, and toasters get the same treatment because it is easier and often less expensive to buy a new product than to fix the old one. Who wants a comfortable old sweater if a new one can be bought on sale? No thought is given to the fact that the new one will look like the old one after two or three washings. We are the great "Let's junk it" society!

Anything can happen at a county agricultural fair. It is the perfect human occasion, the harvest of the fields and of the emotions. To the fair come the man and his cow, the boy and his girl, the wife and her green tomato pickles, each anticipating victory and the excitement of being separated from his or her money by familiar devices. It is at a fair that a man can be drunk forever on liquor, love, or fights; at a fair that your front pocket can be picked by a trotting horse looking for sugar, and your hind pocket by a thief looking for his fortune.

3

This was one of the worst situations I had ever been in. There was a tube in my nose that went all the way to the pit of my stomach. I was being fed intravenously, and there was a drain in my side. Everybody came to visit me, mainly out of curiosity. The girls were all anxious to know where I had gotten shot. They had heard all kinds of tales about where the bullet struck. The bolder ones wouldn't even bother to ask: they just snatched the cover off me and looked for themselves. In a few days, the word got around that I was in one piece.

1.1.1.3. DISTINGUISHING A TOPIC SENTENCE FROM A TITLE

The topic sentence works like a title by announcing to the reader what the paragraph is about. However, keep in mind that the title of an essay or book is usually a single word or short phrase, whereas the topic sentence of a paragraph must always be a complete sentence.

Title: Backpacking in the mountains Topic sentence: **Backpacking in the mountains last year was an exhausting experience.**

Title: The stress of college registration Topic sentence: **College registration can be stressful.**

Indicate whether each of the following examples is a title (T) or a topic sentence (TS) by writing T or TS in the space provided:

The benefits of a college education (.....)

The outstanding achievements of aviator Charles Lindbergh (.....)

The president's cabinet faced two major problems (.....)

The basis of the Arab-Israeli conflict (.....)

The Mediterranean diet is perhaps the healthiest diet in the world (.....)

The astounding beauty of the Rocky Mountains at dusk (.....)

The finest sports car on the market (.....)

1.1.1.4. CHOOSING CONTROLLING IDEAS FOR TOPIC SENTENCES

Below are two topics. For each topic, think of three possible controlling ideas, and then write a topic sentence for each of these controlling ideas. An example is done for you.

Topic: My mother

Three possible controlling ideas:

- 1 Unusual childhood
- 2 Silent woman
- 3 Definite ideas about alcohol

Three different topic sentences:

1. My mother had a most unusual childhood.
2. My mother is a very silent woman.
3. My mother has definite ideas about alcohol.

1. Topic: My father	
First controlling idea:	First topic sentence:
Second controlling idea:	Second topic sentence:
Third controlling idea:	Third topic sentence:
2. Topic: Canada	
First controlling idea:	First topic sentence:
Second controlling idea:	Second topic sentence:
Third controlling idea:	Third topic sentence:

2. UNITY AND COHERENCE

2.1. UNITY: ALL PARTS RELATING TO THE CENTRAL THEME

In a piece of good writing, every sentence serves the central theme, with every detail directly related to the main idea. All of the parts go together to make up a whole. The result is a sense of oneness or wholeness, so that by the end of the piece, the writing feels complete and the reader has no trouble grasping the writer's main point.

The following paragraph lacks unity because some sentences do not contribute to the main idea. As you read the paragraph, cross out any sentences that do not contribute to the unity of the piece.

Many parents fear the time when their children reach adolescence. When that time does come, some parents are afraid to give their children freedom to make choices. These same parents do not admit that their children have any ideas or feelings that are valid. Many adults like to look back on their own childhoods. Pets are often remembered fondly. Conflicts between parents and adolescents are bound to develop. Some conflicts, of course, are a sign of healthy development within the family. Psychologists say that parents should not be fearful when teenagers challenge authority. Challenging authority is a normal part of the maturing process. Adults without children have none of these concerns. The need for privacy is also normal during adolescence and should be respected rather than feared. On the other hand, when the right moment comes along and a teenager wants to talk, parents should not miss the opportunity to connect. Sometimes teenagers and their younger brothers and sisters fight continually over the most trivial things. Most important of all is the need for parents to be sensitive to the feelings of their teenagers. Remember, adolescence does not last for a lifetime, but a good relationship between parent and child can!

2.2. COHERENCE: CLEAR AND LOGICAL PROGRESSION OF THOUGHT

A piece of writing needs careful organization of all its parts so that one idea leads logically to the next. To help all the parts relate to one another, writers use three important techniques: repetition of key words, use of synonyms and pronouns to refer to key words, and careful choice of transitional expressions.

All writers must continually work to achieve coherence. Even professional writers work on more than one draft because they see room for improvement as they move from one idea, one sentence, or one paragraph to the next. If something is unclear or lacks logical sequence, they revise.

The following paragraph is taken from a December 2000 article in the Harvard Business Review. The piece was intended to show people in business how to create “buzz” about a new fashion trend and thereby increase the sales of a product. The hot product in this case is the “hush puppy.” The paragraph is a good example of how writers achieve coherence in their work by using repetition of key words, using pronouns and synonyms to refer to these key words, and choosing transitional expressions that will help the reader move from one thought to another.

Sometimes even the most ordinary products can benefit from buzz. Remember **Hush Puppies**? When the company discovered that hip New York City kids were snapping up vintage pairs of **its Hush Puppies** at secondhand stores, **it** rushed into action. **It** began making **its shoes** in shades like Day-Glo orange, red, green and purple. **Next**, **it** sent free **samples** to celebrities, and not long after, David Bowie and Susan Sarandon were spotted wearing **them**. **Then** the company tightly controlled distribution, limiting the **shoes** to a handful of fashionable outlets. **Soon** high-end retailers like Saks, Bergdorf Goodman, and Barneys were begging for **them**. **In just three years**, from **1994** to 1996, **Hush Puppies** saw its annual sales of **pups** in North America skyrocket from fewer than 100,000 pairs to an estimated 1.5 million.

2.2.1. REPETITION OF KEY WORDS

Notice that the key words “Hush Puppies” appear in the second sentence and again in the third sentence. In the last sentence, the words “Hush Puppies” occur for a third time and also a fourth time with a shortened, less formal name, “pups.”

2.2.2. KEY NOUN SUBSTITUTE: USING SYNONYMS AND PRONOUNS TO REFER TO KEY WORDS

Writers often need to find other words or phrases to substitute for the key word so they will not have to repeat it over and over again. Notice in the paragraph how the author has twice used the common noun shoes to substitute for the proper noun Hush Puppies. Also samples is used in one instance to refer to Hush Puppies.

Even more common is the use of pronouns to refer to key words. Here the pronoun them is used twice to refer to the Hush Puppies. In addition, notice the five pronouns (its, it, it, its, it) that refer to the shoe company.

2.2.3. USE OF TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSIONS

Finally, coherence is achieved through the careful use of transitions. Transitions are words and expressions used in a piece of writing to show how the different ideas relate to each other. In the paragraph on Hush Puppies, several transitional expressions (marked in yellow highlighting) help the reader move forward through a sequence of events: next, then, soon, and in just three years.

Studying a Text for Coherence:

Read the following paragraph to discover the techniques used by the writer to achieve coherence.

Find:

- (1) two examples of the repetition of key words.*
- (2) three examples of pronoun reference.*
- (3) one example of a phrase that is a synonym for web pages.*
- (4) one example of a transitional word or expression.*

More than one billion web pages currently exist online and are accessible to the public. These pages are not numbered. They are not organized. They do not come with a table of contents or an index. It is as if people around the world took all their books and magazines, ripped out all the pages, and dumped them into one gigantic pile. In the past five years, that pile has grown bigger and bigger and bigger. So how do you find your way through this maze of information? The answer is search engines. As with any technology, some very smart people have devised new search engines for the Internet, based on the lessons of the previous generation. Names like Google, Yahoo!, and Alta Vista have become well known. They will likely be your best bet for quickly finding what you need on the web.

2.2.4. TRANSITIONS

Transitions are words or phrases that take the reader from one idea to another. Here are some of the most commonly used transitional expressions. They are especially useful when you want to make the connections between ideas clear to your readers.

Examples of transitions:

3.2.4.1. TRANSITIONS FOR DESCRIPTION—TO SHOW PLACE

above
beneath
ahead
in the distance

3.2.4.2. TRANSITIONS FOR NARRATION—TO SHOW A SHIFT IN TIME

Recently
Previously
Earlier
within a few minutes

3.2.4.3. TRANSITIONS TO SHOW EXAMPLES

for example
a case in point is. . .
an illustration of this is. . .
for instance

3.2.4.4. TRANSITIONS FOR PROCESS

the first step
to start with
while you are. . .
next

3.2.4.5. TRANSITIONS FOR COMPARISON

again
like
also
likewise

3.2.4.6. TRANSITIONS FOR CONTRAST

although
nevertheless
but
on the other hand

3.2.4.7. TRANSITIONS FOR CAUSE

Because
results from
the reason is that
since

3.2.4.8. TRANSITIONS FOR EFFECT

Accordingly
as a result
consequently
thus

3.2.4.9. TERMS THAT SIGNAL CLASSIFICATION

Divisions
categorized by
types
areas

3.2.4.10. PHRASES THAT SIGNAL DEFINITION

is defined as
is understood to be
means that
is sometimes thought to be

3.2.4.11. TRANSITIONS FOR PERSUASION

To signal the thesis:

I agree (disagree)
I (do not) support
I am (not) in favor of
I propose

To signal a reason:

a convincing piece of evidence
an additional reason
because
in view of this fact

To admit an opponent's viewpoint:

while it is true
although there are those who. . .

the opposition would have you believe. . .
of course,
To signal a conclusion:

Therefore
Consequently
as a result

2.2.5. SENTENCE VARIETY

3.2.5.1. SENTENCE LENGTH

Using about the same sentence length throughout your entire paper will reduce the chances that something will stand out in your writing. If you have lots of short sentences in a row, your writing will come off as choppy. On the other hand, lots of long sentences in a row can be difficult and boring to read.

To check the sentence length in your writing, go through your paper and count the number of words in each sentence. Make a list. Are all the numbers the same? Do you have too many long sentences? Are there lots of short sentences in a row? If so, consider combining a few sentences or breaking down longer ones to add more sentence variety.

3.2.5.2. SENTENCE STRUCTURE

A typical sentence follows this format: subject-verb-object. To add variety, mix up your sentence structure. Some ways to do this include:

Starting with an adverb.

Examples:
Suddenly she jumped to her feet and ran to the door.
Unfailingly, he arrives at work at 6 AM every morning.

Beginning the sentence with a prepositional phrase (a phrase that modifies a noun or verb).

Examples:
In the garden, she worked to clear out the weeds and deadhead the flowers.
Before purchasing a new couch, it's important to measure your doorway.

Inverting the subject and verb in the sentence.

Examples:
Sprinting to the train, she made it just before the doors closed.
Using baking soda and vinegar, you can unclog your shower drain.

3.2.5.3. FIRST WORDS

Pay attention to the way you start each sentence. If you constantly start with the same word or two, your readers are going to get bored.

To check your writing, make a list of the first word in each sentence. Are there any times that you repeat the same word several times in a row? Is there a word or two that you use a lot to start sentences in your writing? If so, add some variety by rewording the sentences and finding a new way to start each one.

3.2.5.4. PUNCTUATION

There are four types of sentences: declarative, interrogative, exclamatory, and imperative. Have you used each type? If every sentence is declarative, you may want to add a few interrogative sentences or maybe work in an exclamatory or imperative sentence, if applicable. Try to refrain from using any one type too much.

You can also use commas, dashes, semicolons, colons, parentheses, and other punctuation to add variety. Just make sure to use all punctuation marks correctly.

3. TYPES OF PARAGRAPH DEVELOPMENT

3.1. DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH

To create effective paragraphs of description, a writer must call upon the five senses.

3.1.1. WHAT IS DESCRIPTION?

Description uses sensory images to create a picture with words.

One method of developing a paragraph is to use descriptive details. For example, when you read the opening pages of almost any novel, you notice that the author has begun the story with one or more paragraphs of description that set the stage for that story.

The following example comes from a personal essay written by Joseph H. Suina. In this paragraph, he describes his childhood home. As you study this description, look for the details that make this paragraph effective.

During those years, Grandmother and I lived beside the plaza in a humble one-room house. It consisted of a traditional fire place, a makeshift cabinet for our few tin cups and dishes, and a wooden crate that held our two buckets of all-purpose water. At the far end of the room were two rolls of bedding we used as comfortable sitting “couches.” Consisting of thick quilts, sheepskin, and assorted blankets, these bed rolls were undone each night. A wooden pole the length of one side of the room was suspended about 10 inches from the ceiling beams. A modest collection of colorful shawls, blankets, and sashes draped over the pole making this part of the room most interesting. In one corner was a bulky metal trunk for our ceremonial wear and few valuables. A dresser, which was traded for some of my grandmother’s well-known pottery, held the few articles of clothing we owned and the “goody bag.” Grandmother always had a flour sack filled with candy, store bought cookies, and Fig Newtons. These were saturated with a sharp odor of moth balls. Nevertheless, they made a fine snack with coffee before we turned in for the night. Tucked securely in my blankets, I listened to one of her stories or accounts of how it was when she was a little girl. These accounts seemed so old fashioned compared to the way we lived. Sometimes she softly sang a song from a ceremony. In this way I fell asleep each night.

When you use effective sensory images in your writing, the descriptive details that result will be memorable and convincing to your reader. Such details will make a tremendous difference in how well your reader is able to imagine what you are describing. You can demonstrate this to yourself by answering the following questions about the descriptive paragraph above on Suina’s childhood home.

1. What do you see?
2. What do you hear?
3. What suggests how something would feel to the touch?
4. What can you smell?
5. What can you taste?

3.1.2. TYPES OF DESCRIPTION

There are two types of description: **objective** and **subjective**.

Objective description *relies on factual detail without much embellishment.*

Example

The snowman consisted of three round balls stacked one on top of the other. It stood five feet high. Its eyes were round stones, with a carrot serving as a nose. A baseball cap sat atop its head.

From this objective description, you can picture the snowman. However, it is difficult to recognize what emotion or impression the writer wants us to feel.

In contrast, subjective description *creates an easily identifiable emotion or impression.*

Example

The snowman's body consisted of three plump balls of fluffy, white snow stacked like an ice-cream cone. Its eyes were made from brightly colored stones, with a squiggly, pigtail, orange carrot serving as a nose. A fuzzy, red baseball cap with a crooked bill sat cockeyed on his head.

From this subjective description, it is clear that the writer wants the snowman to evoke a funny or happy emotion. Objective description tells what the writer actually sees. Subjective description shows how the writer feels.

3.1.3. USING ADJECTIVES

Adjectives are words that tell us how things look, feel, taste, sound, or smell. Adjectives also describe how you feel about something. Here are a few common adjectives.

shape and size

large / small
wide / narrow
round
rectangular

atmosphere

cozy
comfortable
warm / cool
cold / hot

how you feel

amazed
surprised
happy
nostalgic

appearance

colorful
unforgettable
beautiful
unattractive

3.1.4. USING PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions tell us how a space is organized. These are some common and useful prepositions:

in front of / behind

on top of / on the bottom of

next to

above / below, underneath

to the right of / to the left of

in the middle of

around

between

3.1.5. DESCRIBE A PLACE

A description of a place may answer some of these questions:

Where is the place?

How big is it?

How warm or cold is the place?

How does the place make you feel? Why?

What things can you see in this place?

What colors do you see?

Write six sentences to describe the place where you are right now. Try to answer some of the questions under 'Using adjectives'. Use adjectives and prepositions.

3.1.6. DESCRIBING A CHARACTER

Here are some common adjectives for describing people:

Personality

happy, satisfied

relaxed

exciting

nervous

angry

serious

sad, depressed

outgoing

Physical characteristics

big, large, tall

small, tiny, short

thin

heavy

strong

weak

brown-, black -, blond-, red-haired

light-, dark-skinned

A description of a person may answer some of the following questions:

Who is the person?

What does the person do?

What does he or she look like?

How does the person act—what is his or her personality like?

How does he or she make others feel?

Describe one of these people. Write eight sentences. Try to answer three or more of the above questions. Use your imagination!

Think of a p or place you know well. Then brainstorm your topic, and write a descriptive paragraph. Brainstorm your ideas, narrow down your topic and write a descriptive paragraph.

3.1.7. SPATIAL ORDER

Spatial order is a good way to organize a descriptive paragraph. Move as a visitor’s eye might move around the room,

from right to left

or

from larger items to smaller ones.

Here are a few transition words of the sort that show spatial relationships.

to the left to the right next to	across from above below	on the opposite side nearby
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Such transitions will help prevent you—and your reader—from getting lost as the description proceeds.

3.2. NARRATIVE PARAGRAPH

3.2.1. WHAT IS NARRATION?

Narration is the oldest and best-known form of verbal communication. It is, quite simply, the **telling of a story**.

3.2.2. USING TRANSITIONS THAT SHOW A SHIFT IN TIME

Although transitions must not be overused, they are important tools for every writer. Here is the Helen Keller paragraph, this time with each of the transitional words and phrases printed in boldface.

The morning after my teacher came, she led me into her room and gave me a doll. The little blind children at the Perkins Institution had sent it and Laura Bridgman had dressed it; but I did not know this **until afterward**. When I had played with it **a little while**, Miss Sullivan slowly spelled into my hand the word “d-o-l-l.” I was **at once** interested in this finger play and tried to imitate it. When I **finally** succeeded in making the letters correctly, I was flushed with childish pleasure and pride. Running downstairs to my mother I held up my hand and made the letters for doll. I did not know that I was spelling a word or even that words existed; I was simply making my fingers go in monkey-like imitation. **In the days that followed** I learned to spell in this uncomprehending way a great many words, among them pin, hat, cup and a few verbs like sit, stand, and walk. But my teacher had been with me **several weeks** before I understood that everything has a name.

3.2.3. TRANSITIONS COMMONLY USED IN NARRATION:

Transitions Commonly Used in Narration to Show a **Shift in Time**

Expresses the past

recently
previously
earlier
in the past
a few days ago
a hundred years ago

Expresses the present

now; by now
at once
suddenly
immediately
meanwhile
at the same time

Expresses time close to the present

within a few minutes
soon; soon afterward
later; later on
after a little while
then
next; the next day

Expresses a long passage of time

several weeks later
the following month
finally
eventually
in the end

3.2.4. STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO WRITING A NARRATIVE PARAGRAPH

1. Study the given topic, and then plan your topic sentence with its controlling idea.
2. List all the events that come to your mind when you think about the story you have chosen.
3. Choose the important events, dropping any that do not directly relate to your controlling idea.
4. Put your list in the correct time sequence.
5. Write one complete sentence for each of the events you have chosen from your list, adding any significant details.
6. Write a concluding statement that gives some point to the events of the story.
7. Copy your sentences into standard paragraph form.
8. Always make a final check for spelling errors and other mistakes, such as omitted words.

This exercise will guide you through the construction of a complete narrative paragraph. Start with the suggested topic. Use the eight steps to help you work through the stages of the writing process.

Topic: Nearly every family has a favorite story they like to tell about one of their members, often a humorous incident that happened to one of them. There are also crises and tragic moments in the life of every family. Choose a story, funny or tragic, from the life of a family member you have known.

1. Topic sentence:
2. Make a list of the events that took place.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
 - f.
 - g.
 - h.
 - i.
 - j.
3. Circle the five or six events you believe are the most important for the point of the story.
4. Put your final choices in order by numbering each of them.
5. Using your final list, write at least one sentence for each event you have chosen.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
 - f.
6. Write a concluding statement.
7. On a separate piece of paper or on the computer, copy your sentences into standard paragraph form.
8. Do a final reading to check for errors and omissions.

3.3. EXPOSITORY PARAGRAPH

3.3.1. DEFINITION:

Expository paragraphs are non-fiction writing.

In an **expository paragraph**, you give information. You explain a subject, give directions, or show how something happens. In expository writing, linking words like first, second, then, and finally are usually used to help readers follow the ideas.

3.3.2. EXPOSITORY ESSAY VARIATIONS

3.3.2.1. DEFINITION PARAGRAPHS

They explain the meaning of a word, term, or concept. The topic can be a concrete subject such as an animal or tree, or it can be an abstract term, such as freedom or love. This type of paragraph should discuss the word's denotation (literal or dictionary definition), as well as its connotation or the associations that a word usually brings to mind.

3.3.2.2. CLASSIFICATION PARAGRAPHS

They break down a broad subject or idea into categories and groups. The writer organizes the paragraph by starting with the most general category and then defines and gives examples of each specific classification.

3.3.2.3. COMPARE AND CONTRAST PARAGRAPHS

They describe the similarities and differences between two or more people, places, or things. Comparison tells how things are alike and contrast shows how they are different.

3.3.2.4. CAUSE AND EFFECT PARAGRAPHS

They explain how things affect each other and depend on each other. The writer identifies a clear relationship between two subjects, focusing on why things happen (causes) and/or what happens as a result (effects).

3.3.2.5. “HOW TO” PARAGRAPHS

Sometimes called **process paragraphs**, explain a procedure, step-by-step process, or how to do something with the goal of instructing the reader.

3.4. PERSUASIVE PARAGRAPH

3.4.1. DEFINITION:

A persuasive paragraph tries to convince the reader that a particular point of view is worthy of consideration. It wants you to consider both sides of an issue, but it reveals a bias in favor of one side over another. Facts may be presented in support of a position, but the writer is not being objective. The point of view is subjective.

objective: impartial; fair; balanced; factual

subjective: partial; in favor of an idea; biased

Here's an example of a persuasive paragraph:

Immigration contributes to the overall health of the American economy. Despite recent concerns expressed about illegal and some legal immigration to the United States, this country has largely benefited from the skills, talents, and ambition that immigrants bring with them. American businesses gain from a good source of affordable labor, while towns and cities are revitalized by immigrant families who strengthen communities through civic participation and the generation of new economic activity. The United States must continue to welcome new arrivals and help those who are already here; otherwise, the country will lose the advantages it has over other industrialized countries that compete against us in the global marketplace and seek to recruit from a vast pool of unskilled and skilled global workers.

3.4.2. PREWRITING FOR THE PERSUASIVE ESSAY

The prewriting phase of writing a persuasive essay is extremely important. During this phase, students should plan every aspect of the essay:

Choose a position.

Students should think about the issue and pick the side they wish to advocate.

Understand the audience.

In order to write an effective persuasive essay, the writer must understand the reader's perspective. Is the reader undecided or inclined to favor one side or the other?

Do the research.

A persuasive essay depends upon solid, convincing evidence. Don't rely on a single source. Pull information from multiple websites and reference materials. Speak with community experts and teachers. Read and take notes. There is no substitute for knowledge of both sides of the issue.

Identify the most convincing evidence, as well as the key points for the opposing view.