

# Paragraphs

There are six main types of paragraphs elementary teachers teach students. These are: narrative, descriptive, definitive, persuasive, instructive, and compare and contrast. Most students struggle writing paragraphs successfully due to lack of content, poor organization, inadequate sentence structure, and a weak vocabulary.

These exercises are designed to guide students with choosing content, improve their written organization, help them discover varied sentence starters and provide concrete vocabulary choices. I have found them to be very effective with many levels of writers. Repetition of the paragraph sentence starter exercise is critical for internalizing the concepts. Maintaining student interest in mastering these critical skills can be done by permitting students to choose their own topics.

by JoAnne Moore  
B Ed

## Using the Question Words as Sentence Starters:

### 1. "What" Words

**Plural Nouns** (*Stars* dotted the sky.)

**Number words** (*Six* men stood still.)

**Size words** (*Large* hills rose into the sky.)

**Shape words** (*Round* tables filled the tent.)

**Age** (*Young* men lined up for miles.)

**Colour words** (*Purple* flowers poked their noses up through the grass.)

**Description words** (*Dainty* lace flowed from the collar of the dress.)

### 2. "When" Words

\*Suddenly

\*All of a sudden

\*At that moment

\*Instantly

\*Soon

\*All at once

\*In a twinkle

\*Just then

\*In a flash/twinkle

\*Later on

\*Not too long

\*In a while

\*A short time later

\*Next

\*In a few minutes

\*Before/Prior

\*After/Afterwards

\***Times of Day** (morning, afternoon, evening, night)

\***Seasons** (spring, summer, autumn, winter)

\***Time Periods** (once upon a time, many years ago, long ago, centuries ago, last week)

### 3. "How" Words

\***ly** words (example: Quickly, the boy snatched up his ball.)

\***ing** words (example: Soaring, the plane flew into the sky.)

### 4. "Where" Words

around, above, behind, beneath, below, beside, between, deep, downwards, down, in, inside, into, on, onto, over, passed, through, to, toward, upon, under,

### 5. "Who" Words

\***Titles** (Mr. Mrs. Miss Dr.)

\***Descriptions of characters**

**Example One:** The little old man limped along.

**Example Two:** The furry creature bounded up to my nose.

\***Names of characters** (Herbert, the horse, flicked his tail.)

\***Pronouns** (I, it, he, her, him, me, my, she, them, they, we)

## "ly" Sentence Starter Dictionary

### A

accidentally    adamantly    alternately    angrily    annually  
 apparently    approvingly    anxiously    assuredly

### B

badly    barely    bashfully    bizarrely    blindly    boastfully  
 boldly    bravely    briefly    brightly    busily    bumpily

### C

calmly    carefully    carelessly    cautiously    cheerfully  
 cheerily    clearly    clumsily    compellingly    correctly  
 courageously    crazily    creepily    crestfallenly    crossly  
 cruelly    currently

### D

daily    daintily    decidedly    defiantly    deliberately  
 doggedly    doubtfully

### E

easily    elegantly    eloquently    enormously    enthusiastically  
 equally    evenly    eventually

### F

faithfully    fatally    ferociously    fiercely    firmly    fondly  
 foolishly    fortunately    frankly    freely    frantically

### G

gently    gladly    gleefully    gracefully    gratefully  
 gravely    greedily    grimly

### H

happily    hastily    honestly    hopefully    hourly    humbly  
 hungrily

### I

innocently    inquisitively    irritably

### J

jauntily    jealously    jokingly    joyously    justly

### K

kindly

### L

lazily    limply    lively    loosely    loudly    lovingly  
 lustily

<b>M</b>					
madly	magnificently	mainly	mercilessly	minutely	mirthfully
mischievously	monthly	mortally	mostly	mysteriously	
<b>N</b>					
nearly	neatly	nervously	noisily		
<b>O</b>					
obediently	obnoxiously	occasionally	only		
<b>P</b>					
painfully	patiently	perfectly	politely	poorly	powerfully
promptly	properly	punctually			
<b>Q</b>					
quarterly	queerly	quickly	quietly	quirkily	
<b>R</b>					
rapidly	rarely	really	recklessly	regularly	reluctantly
repeatedly	rightfully	righteously		roughly	rudely
<b>S</b>					
sadly	safely	selfishly	seriously	shakily	sharply
sheepishly	shrilly	shyly	silently	skeptically	sleepily
slowly	smartly	smoothly	softly	solemnly	sneakily
sneeringly	speedily	stealthily	sternly	successfully	suddenly
surely	suspiciously	swiftly			
<b>T</b>					
tenderly	thoughtfully	tightly	tragically	tremendously	truthfully
<b>U</b>					
unexpectedly	unusually	unconsciously			
<b>V</b>					
valiantly	vehemently	victoriously	viciously	violently	vivaciously
<b>W</b>					
warmly	weakly	wearily	weekly	widely	wildly
<b>Y</b>					
yearly					

## Paragraphs with Sentence Starter Practice

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. "What" Words

- |               |               |                    |      |
|---------------|---------------|--------------------|------|
| *Plural Nouns | *Number Words | *Size Words        | *Age |
| *Shape Words  | *Colour Words | *Description Words |      |

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### 2. "When" Words

- |                     |                  |                   |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| *Suddenly           | *All of a sudden | *At that moment   |
| *Instantly          | *Soon            | *All at once      |
| *In a twinkle       | *Just then       | *In a flash       |
| *Later on           | *Not too long    | *In a while       |
| *A short time later | *Next            | *In a few minutes |

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### 3. "How" Words

- \*ly words
- \*ing words

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#### 4. "Where" Words

around, above, behind, beneath, below, beside, between, downwards, down, in, inside, into, on, onto, over, through, to, toward, upon, under

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#### 5. "Who" Words

\*Titles (Mr. Mrs., Miss, Dr. Rev.)

\*Description of characters

Example one: The little old man limped along.

Example Two: The furry creature bounded up to my nose.

\*Names of characters (Herbert, the horse, flicked his tail.)

\*Pronouns (I, it, he, her, him, me, my, she, them, they, we)

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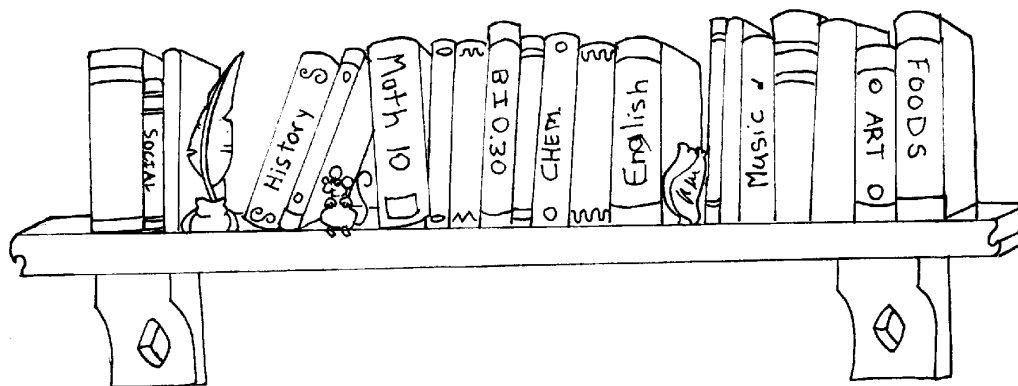
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## Narrative

\*Narrative paragraphs tell a fictional story, historical event, or a present day factual story. Listing the order/sequence of main events in point form is often critical for comprehension. This activity is known as summarization.

\*Narrative paragraphs may contain a main character with a motive. If there is a motive, it should be identified (what the main character wants, doesn't want, or needs). Is the motive resolved? Does the main character get what he wants, doesn't want, or needs? Linking the character's motive with a similar motive or experience in the lives of students is critical for retention and understanding.

\*Narrative paragraphs may contain a character experiencing a strong emotion. Identify any strong emotions. These are found by locating the descriptions of a character's facial expressions, body language, speech, and actions. Joining the character's emotions with a similar feeling and experience in the lives of students is essential for comprehension.

## What Paragraphs

## Descriptive

\*Physical descriptions of things, events, people or places. Breaking down the sensory imagery used (saw, heard, felt, smelled, tasted) is necessary for visualizing and retaining the description.

\*Similes and metaphors are frequently used in a descriptive paragraph. A simile is a comparison between two things using the words "like" or "as". A metaphor compares two things without using the words "like" or "as".

## Definition

Definition paragraphs give meanings to new terms, concepts or ideas. Connecting the new information to similar things the student already knows is essential for retention and understanding. Diagrams, maps, photos, and creating physical or mental pictures are necessary tools for summarizing.

## Why Paragraphs

## Persuasive

\*Persuasive paragraphs try to convince the reader to believe in a particular viewpoint by using reasons or arguments.

\*In a newspaper, these types of paragraphs are found in the editorial columns. In the editorial columns, they frequently take the form of a letter to the editor.

## How Paragraphs

## Instruction

Instruction paragraphs show:

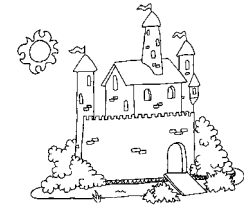
- how to achieve a goal (the order or sequence of steps is important)
- how to solve a problem (the order or sequence of directions/instructions/steps is important)
- how to understand or create something (the order or sequence of directions/instructions/steps is important)

## Contrast/Compare

Contrast and compare paragraphs show how two or more people/places/things/ideas/positions are similar and different



# What Paragraphs



## Type: Descriptive

\*Physical descriptions of things, events, people or places.

\*Metaphors and Similes are often used here

Great Verbs I wish to include are:

This paragraph will describe a:

1. Thing: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Event: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Choose one \*Metaphor or \*Simile to use:

I got my ideas:

\*from television: \_\_\_\_\_

\*from a book: \_\_\_\_\_

\*when I went: \_\_\_\_\_

\*when I experienced: \_\_\_\_\_



Brainstorm Nouns and Verbs for Writing

saw:



heard:

tasted:



felt:



scent/smell of:

# What Paragraphs



## Type: Definition

\*Definition paragraphs give meanings to new terms, concepts or ideas.

Great Verbs I wish to include are:

This paragraph will describe a:

1. Term: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Concept: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Idea: \_\_\_\_\_

I got my ideas:

\*from television: \_\_\_\_\_

\*from a book: \_\_\_\_\_

\*when I went: \_\_\_\_\_

\*when I experienced: \_\_\_\_\_



Summarize the term, concept or idea by drawing a diagram, graph, map or sketching a picture in this box. Label it.

# Why Paragraphs



## Type: Persuasive

Persuasive paragraphs try to convince reader to believe in a particular viewpoint by listing reasons or presenting arguments.

Great Verbs I wish to include are:

This paragraph will persuade the reader:

\*to believe:

\*to want:

\*that he/she needs:

And that the solution is:

I got my ideas:

\*from television: \_\_\_\_\_

\*from a book: \_\_\_\_\_

\*when I went: \_\_\_\_\_

\*when I experienced: \_\_\_\_\_

Summarize the reasons or arguments you will use:

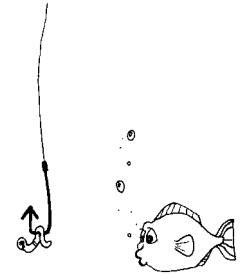
List them in point form:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

# How Paragraphs

## Type: Instruction

Instruction paragraphs show how to: achieve a goal, solve a problem, understand or create something.



Great Verbs I wish to include:

This paragraph will teach the reader how to:

\*achieve the goal of:

\*solve the problem of:

\*understand or create:

I got my ideas:

\*from television: \_\_\_\_\_

\*from a book: \_\_\_\_\_

\*when I went: \_\_\_\_\_

\*when I experienced: \_\_\_\_\_

Summarize the order of the *steps* or *directions* or *instructions* below:

List them in point form or draw them:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_



# How Paragraphs

## Type: Contrast/Compare

Contrast/Compare paragraphs show how two or more people/places/things/ideas/positions are similar and different



Great Verbs I wish to include are:

This paragraph will contrast and compare:

\*people:

\*places:

\*things:

\*ideas:

\*positions:

I got my ideas:

\*from television: \_\_\_\_\_

\*from a book: \_\_\_\_\_

\*when I went: \_\_\_\_\_

\*when I experienced: \_\_\_\_\_

Contrasted and compare: people, places, things, ideas, or positions by summarizing main points below.

Similarities listed in point form:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Differences listed in point form:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

## 'What' Paragraph Vocabulary

### 1. Narrative Paragraphs

#### **\*Describe**

account, expose, disclose, summarize, account, narration, recital, rehearsal, recitation, history, biography, autobiography, obituary, narrative, memoir, annals, chronicle, legend, story, tale, yarn, anecdote, adventures, fortunes, confessions, experiences, fable, parable

#### **\*Sequence**

order, steps, arrange, range, array, align, form, place, list, file, first, initially, beginning, starting, originally, before, ahead, sooner, priority, leading, chiefly, primarily, second, third, fourth, next, after, then, later, following, ensuing, subsequently, finally, lastly, outcome, ultimately, the result was

#### **\*events**

occasion, occurrence, happening, affair, episode, incident, gala affair, holiday, experience, circumstance, issues, outcomes, results

#### **\*Contend**

strive, struggle, grapple, contest, oppose, fight, combat, battle, engage, fall to, set to, wrestle, spar, compete

#### **\*Viewpoint**

angle, belief, point of view, standpoint, outlook, notion, opinion

#### **\*View**

consider, survey, view, regard, study, review, research, consider, deliberate, ponder, brood, contemplate, ruminate, speculate, weigh, muse, believe, judge, deem, regard, take into account, heed, mark, notice, mind, attend, respect

## 'What' Paragraph Vocabulary

### 2. Descriptive Paragraphs

#### **\*Describe**

account, expose, disclose, summarize, account, narration, recital, rehearsal, recitation, history, biography, autobiography, obituary, narrative, memoir, annals, chronicle, legend, story, tale, yarn, anecdote, adventures, fortunes, confessions, experiences, fable, parable

#### **\*Sequence**

order, steps, arrange, range, array, align, form, place, list, file, first, initially, beginning, starting, originally, before, ahead, sooner, priority, leading, chiefly, primarily, second, third, fourth, next, after, then, later, following, ensuing, subsequently, finally, lastly, outcome, ultimately, the result was

#### **\*events**

occasion, occurrence, happening, affair, episode, incident, gala affair, holiday, experience, circumstance, issues, outcomes, results

#### **\*settings**

place, landscape, location, city, country,

#### **\*characters**

person, personified object or animal

#### **\*Simile**

a comparison between two things using the words "like" or "as"

#### **\*Metaphor**

giving a human the qualities of a thing or object without the use of the words "like" or "as"

#### **\*Personification**

giving an object or thing the qualities of a human

#### **\*Sensory Imagery**

using the five senses to describe an event

## 'What' Paragraph Vocabulary

### 3. Definition Paragraphs

#### **\*Describe**

account, expose, disclose, summarize, account, narration, recital, rehearsal, recitation, history, biography, autobiography, obituary, narrative, memoir, annals, chronicle, legend, story, tale, yarn, anecdote, adventures, fortunes, confessions, experiences, fable, parable

#### **\*events**

occasion, occurrence, happening, affair, episode, incident, gala affair, holiday, experience, circumstance, issues, outcomes, results

#### **\*Terms**

provisions, limitations, stipulations, conditions, agreements, relationships, footing, qualifications, commands, restrictions, allowances, considerations, provisions

#### **\*Concept**

idea, thought, notion, conceit, interpretation

#### **\*Viewpoint**

standpoint, belief, outlook

#### **\*View**

consider, survey, view, regard, study, review, research, consider, deliberate, ponder, brood, contemplate, ruminate, speculate, weigh, muse, believe, judge, deem, regard, take into account, heed, mark, notice, mind, attend, respect

#### **\*Explain**

expound, solve, resolve, demonstrate, account for, define, describe, develop, detail, comment, interpret

## 'Why' Paragraph Vocabulary

### 1. Persuasive Paragraphs

#### **\*Describe**

account, expose, disclose, summarize, account, narration, recital, rehearsal, recitation

#### **\*View**

consider, survey, view, regard, study, review, research, consider, deliberate, ponder, brood, contemplate, ruminate, speculate, weigh, muse, believe, judge, deem, regard, take into account, heed, mark, notice, mind, attend, respect

#### **\*Explain**

expound, solve, resolve, demonstrate, account for, define, describe, develop, detail, comment, interpret

#### **\*Terms**

provisions, limitations, stipulations, conditions, agreements, relationships, footing, qualifications, commands, restrictions, allowances, considerations, provisions

#### **\*Concepts**

idea, thought, notion, conceit, interpretation

#### **\*Viewpoint**

standpoint, belief, outlook

#### **\*Reasons**

arguments, logic, case, terms, premise, data, principles, hypothesis, supposition

#### **\*Persuade**

convince, assure, reason, satisfy, win over, assure, influence, argue

#### **\*Causes**

create, sow, birthed, on account of, due to, since, in view of, therefore, now that, by, because, by reason of, in light of

#### **\*Effects**

consequence, results, upshot, issue, outcome, denouement, outgrowth, development, aftermath, after-effect, fallout, produced, effectuated, brought about, gave rise to, sprung out of, grew out of, consequently, eventually, therefore, as a consequence, in the wake of

#### **Qualifications**

limitation, modification, restriction, allowance, consideration, conditionally, admittedly, provided if, unless, but, yet, nevertheless, according as, supposing, with the understanding, even, although, though, after all, at all events, with a grain of salt, wind and weather permitting, if possible, subject to, with this proviso, on condition that, except for, with the exception of

## 'How' Paragraph Vocabulary

### 1. Instruction Paragraphs

#### **\*Teach**

practice, train, exercise, apply, perform, drill, rehearse, teach, instruct, educate, guide, tutor, coach, direct, advise, enlighten, inform, prepare, nurture

#### **\*Explain**

expound, solve, resolve, demonstrate, account for, define, describe, develop, detail, comment, interpret\

#### **\*Instruction**

direction, teaching, education, training, coaching, advice, advising

#### **\*Concept**

idea, thought, notion, conceit, interpretation

#### **\*Ability**

skill, capacity to, capability of, aptitude, faculty, talent, knack, mastery, expertise, proficiency, competence

#### **\*Method**

way, form, design, procedure, process, system, technique, strategy, tactic, formula, order, manner, mode, means, schemata, key, answer, solution, tool

#### **\*Sequence**

order, steps, arrange, range, array, align, form, place, list, file, first, initially, beginning, starting, originally, before, ahead, sooner, priority, leading, chiefly, primarily, second, third, fourth, next, after, then, later, following, ensuing, subsequently, finally, lastly, outcome, ultimately, the result was

#### **\*Acquire**

develop, learn, gain, get, find, obtain, glean

## 'How' Paragraph Vocabulary

### 2. Contrast/Compare Paragraphs

#### **\*Explain**

expound, solve, resolve, demonstrate, account for, define, describe, develop, detail, comment, interpret

#### **\*Instruction**

direction, teaching, education, training, coaching, advice, advising

#### **\*Describe**

account, expose, disclose, summarize, account, narration, recital, rehearsal, recitation, history, biography, autobiography, obituary, narrative, memoir, annals, chronicle, legend, story, tale, yarn, anecdote, adventures, fortunes, confessions, experiences, fable, parable

#### **\*Contrast**

difference, disparity, opposition, dissimilar

#### **\*Compare**

similar, resembles, likeness, affinity, parallels, analogous

#### **\*Concept**

idea, thought, notion, conceit, interpretation

#### **\*Method**

way, form, design, procedure, process, system, technique, strategy, tactic, formula, order, manner, mode, means, schemata, answer, solution, tool