

---

# Grammar on the Go!



**What kind  
of paragraph  
are you?**

## Paragraphs

© 2006 by Open School BC

All rights reserved. Open School BC content and modified versions of this course may neither be resold or distributed in whole or in part without permission from Open School BC, nor be transferred to other learning management systems or services without prior permission from Open School BC.

**Acknowledgements:**

Illustration, page 108, Fish and Worm,  
used with the permission of Brian Glover and Faith Glover

Print History

New, August 2006

**Project Manager:** Monique Brewer

**Writers:** Heidi Greco, Mike Sherman, Monique Brewer

**Reviewer/Editor:** Monica Morris

**Editor:** Lee Mackenzie MacAnally, Adrian Hill

**Production Technicians:** Laurie Lozoway, Brian Glover



**What kind  
of paragraph  
are you?**

## Paragraphs

## Grammar on the Go!

A paragraph has a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a closing sentence. Each sentence in the paragraph should focus on one main idea. Paragraphs generally have five sentences.

Parts of a Paragraph	167
Types of Paragraphs	169
Paragraph Order	171
<b>Answer Key</b>	<b>207</b>



# PARTS OF A PARAGRAPH

When you are constructing a paragraph, think of a sandwich. The top and bottom slices are like the topic and concluding sentences to hold the paragraph together. The meat, cheese, and lettuce on the inside bring substance and flavour to your paragraph.



## Topic Sentence

The topic sentence expresses the main idea of a paragraph —what the paragraph is about.

The main idea should be small enough to explain in a few sentences. For example, “global warming” would be too large an idea to explain in a paragraph, but “severe flooding near the Fraser River” is manageable.

Your topic sentence should also let the reader know how you are going to approach the topic.

“Severe floods are occurring more frequently near the Fraser River.”



## Supporting Sentences

The body of a paragraph supports the main idea with description, facts, examples, and other details to help the reader understand the topic. Generally, three different facts, examples, or details support the topic sentence.

“My aunt and her family lost their home and all their possessions this year when the Fraser River flooded. They had been warned about the danger last year when there was a lot of rain, but decided to stay because they didn’t think the flooding could happen two years in a row.”

## Closing Sentence

The closing or concluding sentence sums up the information in the paragraph, explains what it means, and often leaves the reader with something to think about.

“My aunt blames global warming for the extreme weather and has decided it’s time to move.”



# TYPES OF PARAGRAPHS

Paragraphs come in all shapes and sizes depending upon what and how you want to communicate. Perhaps you want to describe your new snowboard to a friend or tell your mom about the funny experience you had on the bus, or ask your teacher for an extension on your English project.

<b>Descriptive</b>	<p>A <b>descriptive paragraph</b> describes a person, place, thing, or idea.</p> <p>Writing an effective descriptive paragraph means appealing to your reader's senses. Use details about how things look (colour, size, shape), what kinds of sounds they make, and what they feel, smell, or taste like.</p> <p><b>Figurative language</b> can liven up your writing, and make your descriptions more colourful.</p>
<b>Narrative</b>	<p>A <b>narrative paragraph</b> tells a story just like a narrator in a story or play. The first person "I" or third person singular "he" or "she" is usually used when writing a narrative.</p>
<b>Persuasive</b>	<p>A <b>persuasive paragraph</b> tries to convince the reader to agree with the writer's opinion on a topic.</p> <p>It is important to present information in a logical, organized way. Use facts and figures to back up your argument.</p> <p>Be sure that whatever facts or examples you use are correct!</p>

<b>Expository</b>	<p>An <b>expository paragraph</b> gives information about a person, place, or thing. It can explain ideas, give directions, or show how to do something.</p> <p>It is important to present the information in a logical order and provide enough details so the reader understands your explanation.</p> <p>Facts are often used in expository paragraphs.</p> <p>Sometimes, these paragraphs are called informative paragraphs.</p>
-------------------	--

## Types of Paragraphs

Read the following sentences. Determine what type of paragraph would contain the sentence. Write the type of paragraph in the space provided.

**descriptive    expository    narrative    persuasive**

\_\_\_\_\_ Who could have imagined that my first solo flight would turn into such a nightmare?

\_\_\_\_\_ With just a few bits of equipment, almost anyone can find water in the desert.


\_\_\_\_\_ The gangly, cud-chewing camel followed the Bedouin trader to the lush, green oasis.

\_\_\_\_\_ They may seem ugly and unimportant, but buzzards play an irreplaceable role in the life cycle of the desert.



# PARAGRAPH ORDER

## Ordering Events in Time

 Events are best presented in the order that they happen. Use time expressions such as **now, then, first, before, later, eventually, finally**. Using time order is especially useful in narrative and expository writing.

I have a routine I always follow when I go to the movie theatre. First, I arrive at the movie theatre and purchase tickets. Then, I go inside to the concession stand to order popcorn and pop. Finally, I find a comfortable seat in the centre of cinema. Once I have completed my routine, I can relax and enjoy the show!

## Ordering Information by Importance

Present information in order of importance, either from most to least important, or from least to most important. Use words like **next, finally, most important, then, first, second**. Using order of importance is especially useful in persuasive and expository writing.

There are a number of reasons why people should follow the speed limit. Firstly, it's important to follow the speed limit to avoid getting into an accident where someone could be injured or possibly killed. Next, following the speed limit can also help to avoid unnecessary and expensive speeding tickets. Finally, following the speed limit is just good driving etiquette.

## Ordering Objects in Space

Describe objects according to how they are located in space to create a visual picture for the reader. Place order could be from left to right, top to bottom, or location to location (such as room to room). Use words like **next to**, **above**, **below**, **further along**, **to the left of**. Using place order is especially useful in descriptive and expository writing.

When I arrived at school on Friday, I was shocked by how quiet it was. I looked to the outside of the building. To the right, the parking lot was almost empty, just a few cars. To the left, at the outside foyer, there were no students out front as there usually was at 8:00 am. When I looked through the school doors, all the lights were off. Then I realized, this Friday was a holiday.



## Paragraph Order

The following paragraph illustrates poor order. Use the numbered list that follows to put the sentences in the paragraph in the correct order. Write the corresponding number in the space provided after the sentence.

### How to Get to the Principal's Office.

If you enter the main door of the school, you'll immediately see the gym. \_\_\_\_ Enter the main office and ask to see the principal, as her office is actually inside the main office. \_\_\_\_ Which way will you take? \_\_\_\_ The other, faster way to get there is to say something rude to your teacher. \_\_\_\_ I know of two ways to get to the principal's office. \_\_\_\_ Walk past the gym, and you'll see the school's main office. \_\_\_\_

- (1) This is the topic sentence. It identifies what the paragraph will be about.
- (2) This sentence establishes a point of entry for the reader.
- (3) This sentence leads the reader further into the school.
- (4) This sentence tells the reader how to proceed to the final stage.
- (5) The fifth sentence completes the plan that was laid out in the topic sentence
- (6) This sentence concludes the paragraph.

## Unity

It's important for a paragraph to have unity—for all of its parts to belong together. One way to be sure your paragraph has unity is to check that each sentence relates to your topic sentence.

Check each sentence in your draft, and be sure that it relates to your main idea. If you find a sentence that doesn't belong, either delete it or use it to start a new paragraph.

## Unity

Find the sentence in this paragraph that does not belong and circle the number.

1)The first snow of the season is always a special event. (2)My mother always sighs, and says how pretty everything looks. (3)My dog just wants to get outside and run in it. (4)My dad is still at work. (5)My older brother always complains because he has to shovel the driveway. (6)I like to just stay quiet and enjoy it.

---

1

# **Grammar on the Go!**

## **Answer Key**

## Paragraphs

### Types of Paragraphs

p.170

Who could have imagined that my first solo flight would turn into such a nightmare? **(narrative)**

With just a few bits of equipment, almost anyone can find water in the desert. **(expository)**

The gangly, cud-chewing camel followed the Bedouin trader to the lush, green oasis. **(descriptive)**

They may seem ugly and unimportant, but buzzards play an irreplaceable role in the life cycle of the desert. **(persuasive)**

### Paragraph Order

p.173

Correct order: (1) I know of two ways to get to the principal's office. (2) If you enter the main door of the school, you'll immediately see the gym. (3) Walk past the gym, and you'll see the school's main office. (4) Enter the main office and ask to see the principal, as her office is actually inside the main office. (5) The other, faster way to get there is to say something rude to your teacher. (6) Which way will you take?

### Unity

p.174

Answer: 4.