**INFO SHEET #3: STRUCTURE OF A PARAGRAPH**

**Competency**

**MELC:** Compose effective paragraphs.

**Objectives**

After the end of the lessons, the learners are expected to be able to:

1. Define paragraph and identify its components or structure;

2. Determine the characteristics of an effective paragraph; and

3. Compose an effective paragraph.

**Key Information**

**EFFECTIVE PARAGRAPHS**

A **paragraph** is a group of sentences that deals with one particular idea, a single topic or a main point. It is the building block of essay development and provides the structure needed to develop the thesis of a paper. It breaks writing into manageable parts so that ideas are arranged logically, making the entire composition easier to understand.

Effective paragraph shows the series of ideas a writer builds within an essay or research paper, making it easier to follow the writer’s purpose, thesis, and supporting points. With each paragraph, there should only be one idea discussed called the controlling idea. The controlling idea is NOT the main idea; rather, it is the writer’s specific stance on that main idea or topic, which limits it subject to be discussed.

An effective paragraph is composed of a topic / key sentence (or mini thesis), relevant supporting

sentences (middle or the body), and an end or closing (or transition / concluding) sentence. This structure is key to keeping your paragraph focused on the main idea and creating a clear and concise image.

Components / Structure of a Paragraph

1. Topic Sentence – tells the readers the main point or main idea of your paragraph. It reveals what the

author wants to say about the topic – propose solutions, argue, explain, etc. It may be in the beginning, at

the end, or in the middle of the paragraph. It can also be explicit, clearly states the ideas that will be elaborated on in the paragraph, or implied.

Topic sentences contain both a main idea (the subject, or topic that the writer is discussing) and a controlling

idea (what the author is saying about the topic) to direct the paragraph.

Example: Marijuana is a destructive influence on teens and causes long-term brain damage.

*main idea*  *controlling idea*

The antinausea properties in marijuana are a lifeline for many cancer patients.

Legalizing marijuana would create a higher demand for Class A and Class B drugs.

*Although the main idea—marijuana—is the same in all three topic sentences, the controlling idea differs depending on the writer’s viewpoint.*

2. Supporting Sentences

Every paragraph needs supporting details to elaborate on the topic sentences. These supporting details

may range from facts, examples, or instances. Most paragraphs contain three to six supporting sentences

depending on the audience and purpose for writing. A supporting sentence usually offers one of the

following:

a. Reason Sentence: The refusal of the baby boom generation to retire is contributing to the current

lack of available jobs.

b. Fact Sentence: Many families now rely on older relatives to support them financially.

c. Statistic Sentence: Nearly 10 percent of adults are currently unemployed in the United States

d. Quotation Sentence: “We will not allow this situation to continue,” stated Senator Johns.

e. Example Sentence: Last year, Bill was asked to retire at the age of fifty-five.

Other ways to support the topic sentence and develop the paragraph includes adding examples, telling

a story or an anecdote that illustrates the point you're making, discussing a process or a cause and effect,

comparing and contrasting point, using analogies (eg., "X is similar to Y because. . . "), defining your

terms, offering a chronology of an event, or citing data (facts, statistics, evidence, details, and others).

3. Concluding / Transitional Sentence – If your paragraph is part of a whole essay, you will write a

transitional sentence that links to the next paragraph. If you are writing only a paragraph, your last sentence

is a true concluding sentence. In both instances, the concluding sentence should give a sense of

completion by drawing together the support to emphasize your focus or topic sentence. It draws together

all the ideas raised in the paragraph, reminding readers of the main point—the topic sentence—without

restating it in exactly the same word. A concluding sentence may do any of the following:

* Restate the main idea. Example: Childhood obesity is a growing problem in the United States.
* Summarize the key points in the paragraph. Example: A lack of healthy choices, poor parenting, and an addiction to video games are among the many factors contributing to childhood obesity.
* Draw a conclusion based on the information in the paragraph. Example: These statistics indicate that unless we take action, childhood obesity rates will continue to rise.
* Make a prediction, suggestion, or recommendation about the information in the paragraph. Example: Based on this research, more than 60 percent of children in the United States will be morbidly obese by the year 2030 unless we take evasive action.
* Offer an additional observation about the controlling idea. Example: Childhood obesity is an entirely preventable tragedy.

**Characteristics of an Effective Paragraph**

**Unity** – means that all of the sentences in the paragraph are related to the topic sentence. The whole paragraph

should begin and end with one focus only.

**Adequate Development** - The topic sentence in the paragraph should be elaborated on using concrete

evidence, different examples, relevant facts, and specific details. Below are some paragraph development

techniques.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Development Strategy | Purpose |
| Narrating | Tell a story; re-create events; present an anecdote |
| Describing | Provide details of a scene or object; portray someone’s character; evoke a feeling or sensory impression |
| Comparing and contrasting | Explore similarities or differences; evaluate options |
| Explaining a process | Provide directions, provide results, explain a procedure, or report on a process |
| Dividing/Classifying | Separate a subject into parts or divide people or objects into categories; explain the relationships among the groups |
| Defining | Explain the meaning of a term or concept; explore and illustrate the meaning of complex concepts |
| Analyzing Cause and Effects | Consider why something happened or might happen; explore possible causes and consequences |

**Coherence** – means that the sentences are arranged in a logical manner, making them easily understood by the reader. Coherence is achieved when ideas flow smoothly within and between paragraphs. A paragraph can become more coherent through the use of logical order and signal / transitional devices. Below are some helpful transitional devices to use in paragraphs:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **For Supporting Sentences** | | | | | |
| above all | but | for instance | in particular | moreover | subsequently |
| also | conversely | furthermore | later on | on one hand | to begin with |
| aside from | correspondingly | however | likewise | on the contrary | therefore |
| at the same time | for example | in addition | meanwhile | nevertheless |  |
| **For Concluding Sentences** | | | | | |
| after all | all things considered | in brief | in summary | on the whole | to sum up |
| all in all | finally | in conclusion | on balance | thus |  |

References:

Villalobos, John Lerry F. (2020). PIVOT 4A Learner’s Module Quarter 1 p. 20-21

**Proposed Performance Tasks**

**1-2-3 Write!**

Based on your prior engagement with Outline Me, construct a paragraph on your chosen topic. Ensure your paragraph follows the three- part structure – introduction, body, and conclusion – while adhering to principles of unity, adequate development, and coherence. Please refer to the rubrics for guidance.

Introduction (Clarity, engagement, and relevance) - 10%

Body (Logical progression and organization) - 10%

Conclusion (Summary and closure) - 10%

Unity (Consistency) - 10%

Coherence (Transitions and flow) - 10%

**50%**

References:

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