

How to Write a Paragraph

Building paragraphs through the use of helpful visuals.

Level: Intermediate

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: board, visual of a paragraph outline, strips of colored paper or markers, pre-written paragraphs

Objective: Students will learn to write coherent paragraphs.

1. Motivation/Warm Up

Show students a simply written paragraph about a simple topic. In this paragraph follow the outline provided below in (2.b.). Read and translate the paragraph. It may be helpful to write this paragraph in the native language of the learners.

2. Presentation

Present the definition of a paragraph and the outline of a paragraph writing using a visual of a building. Then deconstruct the previously shown paragraph by identifying the topic sentence, supporting ideas and closing statement.

a. What is a paragraph: A paragraph is a group of sentences about one main idea. This main idea is the topic. The first sentence of a paragraph is called a topic sentence. The topic sentence is supported by three ideas. Complete the paragraph with a closing sentence.

b. Outline of a paragraph:

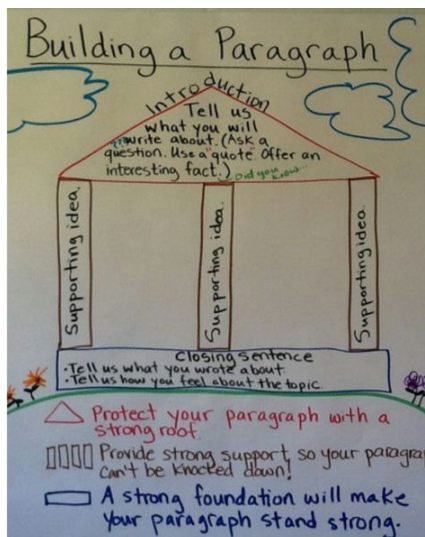
I. Start with a clear topic sentence.

II. Idea supporting the topic sentence. Begin each sentence with a capital letter and end each sentence with a period. Do not start each new sentence on a new line.

III. Second supporting idea.

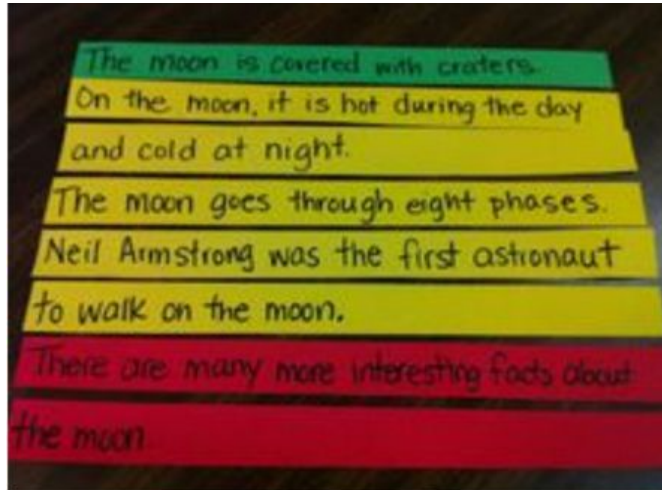
IV. Third supporting idea.

V. Closing statement that summarizes the supporting ideas and concludes your opinion about the topic sentence.



3. Practice

Give students strips of paper. (One green strip, 3 yellow strips, and one red strip.) Explain that the green strip is for a topic sentence, the yellow strips for supporting details, and the red strip for the closing sentence. If you don't have colored paper, you could also have students write with different colored markers or pencils, or you could have students draw the sentences like the building figure above (roof for the topic sentence, columns for the supporting ideas, and foundation for the closing statement). Write a paragraph on the board and have students identify the elements of a paragraph. Do this exercise several times, each time making the sample paragraph less conventional.



4. Produce

Give the students a topic to write a paragraph on, perhaps using words from a recent vocabulary unit. When they are finished, read students' paragraphs out loud and identify the elements of a paragraph in peers' work.