

Lesson One and Two

The Narrative Paragraph

Objectives: After learning this unit, you will be able to:

- identify key elements in a narrative paragraph,
- write narrative paragraph about an event or story.

Part One: Writing a Narrative Paragraph

WHAT IS NARRATIVE PARAGRAPH?

Narrative paragraph tells a story or an event. Events in narrative paragraph should be arranged chronologically, that is in the order in which they have happened.

Almost everyone narrates, reads, or listens to stories from books, other people, or media. However, the audience expects and needs more from a written narrative. Therefore, a narrative paragraph must have a central idea (what the story/event is about), characters (who it about), a plot (conflict, complication, climax, and resolution of the story/event), adequate description, and setting (when and where the story happens)

DEVELOPING A NARRATIVE PARAGRAPH

A good narrative paragraph normally requires three necessary components: background information, the story/event, and conclusion.

- **1. Background information**

The background information sets the scene for the audience. It includes the following pieces of information:

- A topic sentence,
- What story/event is about,
- Who it is about,
- When it happens,
- Where it happens,
- Where is the source of the narration.

Note: the topic sentence of a narrative paragraph does not start the narration. It establishes a purpose. It does not tell only a story, but also the reader's view point. Therefore, writing a strong topic sentence is important.

- **2. Story**

The story or event happens in 3 different stages: the beginning, the middle, and the end of the story or event.

- ***beginning of the story*** -- the beginning tells what happens first in the story. It can be the problem which makes the story or event happen.
- ***middle of the story*** -- the middle tells the main events or important activities of the story/event.
- ***end of the story*** -- the end tells the final events, i.e. the result or what brings the end of the story/event.

- **3. Conclusion**

It is a concluding sentence. The writer can either restate the topic sentence, give a concluding remark, make a prediction about the story, or make a suggestion.

Read the following sample paragraph and explanation below:

Tum Teav

(1) Tum Teav is an interesting story. (2) The story is a real love tragedy happened in the 16th century in presently Kampong Cham province. (3) It is widely taught in high school. (4) The story begins when Tum and Teav fall in love at their first sight. (5) Their love is so deep that they have abused the traditional barriers and engaged in a pre-marriage love affair – it is strongly prohibited in Khmer culture. (6) Not long after, Teav's mum arranges a marriage with rich guy for Teav, but fails. (7) Then, Teav is selected as a concubine and sent to the capital. (8) The king admires her so much, but with mercy he offers Tum and Teav a wedding. (9) As dissatisfaction grows, Teav's mum rearranges the marriage with the previous guy. (10) Teav is deceived and comes back home. (11) With worry, Tum follows her. (12) Tum arrival at Teav's wedding marks end of the story. (13) Tum is caught and executed. (14) Teav, with love for her husband, commits suicide. (15) The couple death outrages the king that he orders execution for those involved in the tragedy. (16) The story, I believe, is so appealing.

Explanation:

- The topic sentence is sentence (1). It tells the purpose, that's what the writer will write about.
- The background information includes sentences (2) and (3). Sentence (2) tells what the story is about, and when and where it happen. Sentence (3) tells the source of the story.
- The story comprises of sentence (4) to (15).
 - Sentence (4) and (5) tell the beginning of the story.
 - Sentence (6)-(11), which is middle of the story, tell the main events happen in the story.
 - Sentence (12)-(15) tells the end of the story.
- Sentence (16) is the concluding sentence. It restates the topic sentence.

TRANSITIONAL WORDS IN NARRATIVE PARAGRAPH

A narrative paragraph tells events in chronological order, so it is important to link event from one event to another. To do so, a writer needs to use transitional words. The common Transitional expressions used in a narrative paragraph are: after, finally, soon, as (soon as), later, then, before, meanwhile, upon, during, next, when, first, now, and while.

TENSES

Use the simple past for succession of events:

- Narrate with the simple past tense when events follow each other. Here are some examples. Notice that each event occurs in succession.

I got up and went to the kitchen. I opened the door and looked into the fridge. She arrived in Dallas, took a cab, and checked in to her hotel. Next, she had some dinner in a restaurant. Finally, she visited a colleague before she went to bed.

Use the past continuous for interrupted actions:

- To express that an action is interrupted, use the past continuous to describe what was happening when there was an interruption. Use the past simple with the action that interrupts what was happening.

Finally, as we were discussing the issue, the teacher walked into the classroom. Obviously, we stopped talking immediately. Sharon was working in the garden when the telephone rang.

Use the past perfect for previous actions:

- To express something that was finished before another event in the past, use the past perfect. This is especially useful when providing an explanation for what happened.

We decided to go out and celebrate because we had just finished remodeling our home. Janet didn't join us for dinner as she had already eaten.

Use the past perfect continuous for the length of actions:

- The past perfect continuous is used to express how long something had been happening up to a point in time in the past.

We had been hiking for more than ten hours and it was time to call it a day. She had been nagging him for months to get a better job when he finally was hired.

PART TWO: Practice

Activity One: Read carefully the paragraphs below, and analyse them as given in the lecture above.

Paragraph 1

A trip to Europe last year taught me I do not need to be afraid of people from other countries. I used to be very scared of people who looked, sounded and acted differently from the people I grew up around. People from Europe and Africa made me especially nervous. But last year, my parents took me to England and France, where I was surrounded by foreigners from many parts of the world. I was very nervous at first, but as I watched and listened to them, I found that even if I could not understand their many languages, they seemed to be saying and doing the same kinds of things we say and do in my country. I even talked to a few Europeans and Africans on buses and trains. They were very friendly and even said they were glad to see that people from my country were not much different from them. Although people from all over the world are not exactly the same, we are still basically the same, so there is no need to be afraid of someone just because they come from a different race or culture.

Paragraph 2

Take Your Medicine

From now on, I will always take my medicine when I catch a cold. This morning, I woke up with a snuffle. I thought nothing of it, because I often have a snuffle in the morning and my snuffle usually goes away after about half an hour. This morning's snuffle did not go away, however, and by the time I got to work, my nose was running non-stop. I was also sneezing. I had to stop talking in the middle of every third sentence to blow nose or sneeze. My students thought it was funny at first, but then they began to feel I was wasting their time and putting them at risk of infection and they complained to my boss. My boss told me I needed to take medicine to stop my symptoms or she would have to fire me. Now I know better than to hope people will not mind if I am sick around them.

Activity Two: write a narrative paragraph about one of the following topics:

A summer trip

A Nightmare you had in your sleep

A funny event

A scary experience you had

Lesson Three and Four : The Descriptive Paragraph

Objectives:

1. Understanding the function, structure and basic elements of the descriptive paragraph
2. Forming correct and compelling topic sentences for the descriptive paragraph
3. Learning the linguistic and discursive techniques required to develop a descriptive paragraph

1.1. What is a descriptive paragraph?

A *descriptive paragraph* describes a thing, a person, or a place. Detailed information allows the reader to form an image in his or her imagination. The better the description, the clearer the image. Descriptive paragraph is paragraph which expresses or describes place, thing and person in such vivid detail that the readers can easily visualize the described place, thing and person, or can feel that they involve in the experience.

Some descriptive paragraphs may be technical, for instance, describing about things or place such as car or classroom; on the other hand, it may describe an event or a place and include more figurative language (simile, metaphor etc.) or describe feeling or emotion. Therefore, before writing a descriptive paragraph, it is important to consider the purpose and the audience.

1. Rich descriptive words put a picture of a person, place, or an object in a readers mind. When a person is writing a descriptive piece, there should be **very detailed observations** (write what you see in your mind). All parts should be equal.
2. You should start at one point and move in one direction as not to confuse the audience. **The reader should be able to envision the picture that you had in your mind as the writer.**

3. In writing a descriptive paragraph, the five senses of **touch, smell, sound, taste, and sight** must be considered. Before writing the paragraph, make five columns and list words or ideas for the subject of the paragraph based on these five senses. Like this:

touch	Smell	sound	taste	sight

Here's an example. I want to write a paragraph that describes a lake:

touch	Smell	sound	taste	sight
water	Air	laughing	sand	the sun
sand	fish	splashing	lotion	sand
heat	hot dogs	music		children
	food trucks	volleyball		lifeguard
	sun block			toys
				boats
				canoes

1.2 Generic Structure

Descriptive paragraph is intended to describe place, person, and thing so that the reader will be able to visualize the descriptions. Writing descriptive paragraph, generally, you have to regard as the following generic structure of descriptive paragraph:

a. Identification

Identification is a part in which you identify or write the recognition; moreover, it can be a general statement about place, person, or thing that you want to describe.

b. Descriptions

Descriptions are vivid detail of place, person, or thing that you want to describe so that the reader can easily imagine or picture the descriptions, or they can feel that they involve in the experience.

c. Conclusion

The last part of descriptive paragraph is optional (i.e. it may be included or not). In this part, you conclude the paragraph or restate the identification or general statement.

SUMMARY:

☐ Descriptive paragraph is paragraph which expresses or describes place, thing and person in such vivid detail that the readers can easily picture or visualize what is being written about, or they can feel that they involve in the experience.

☐ In writing descriptive paragraph, there are some generic structures that should be followed:

a. Identification

You identify or write general statement of the place, person, or thing that you want to describe.

b. Descriptions

You describe the place, person, or thing which is going to be described.

c. Conclusion

This part may be included or not. It can be restatement or conclusion of the paragraph.

2.1 Characteristics of a Good Descriptive Paragraph

Instead of having characteristics a good paragraph as what has been previously stated in module 1 (i.e. topic sentence, supporting sentences, unity and coherence), www.kangguru.org writes a good descriptive paragraph should also possess the following characteristics:

☐ Using imaginative language, interesting comparisons and images that appeal to the reader's senses.

- ☐ Using specific and concrete vocabulary to describe details.
- ☐ Involving the reader enough so he/she can actually visualize or picture the things, person or people being described.
- ☐ Using appropriate transitional phrases so that the paragraph will be well organized and structured.
- ☐ Considering the purpose and audience of the paragraph.

2.2 Writing Descriptive Paragraph

In this sub discussion you will be given step by step processes of writing descriptive paragraph. The process of writing descriptive paragraph is preceded by writing the identification, descriptions, and conclusion, and it can be further described as follows:

a. Identification

Identification states or identifies the place, person or thing that you want to describe. Identification can be used as topic sentence of the paragraph.

Example: Slash is one of my favourite guitar players

b. Descriptions

After stating identification of the paragraph, now you try to develop it through providing it with some descriptions that can picture place, person, or thing that you are going describe. These descriptions should be well organized in order to make it easier to read and understand.

The following are some descriptions which can be drawn from the topic sentences:

Example:

- His skill is not good enough.
- His style in playing guitar amazes me.
- He is tall.
- He has white skin with a hairy skull and his name tattooed on his right upper arm.
- He has special characteristic that differentiates him with other guitarists.
- He has long black curly hair covered by magician hat and tight skin pants.
- He always uses 'Les Paul Gibson' guitar.
- He also uses some accessories such as rings, silver bangles, skull necklace, and a gold 'nose ring' jabbed on the right nostril.

c. Conclusion

After writing a good identification and its descriptions, now you should also write a good conclusion. A conclusion is not absolutely necessary, but it is very often very helpful to the reader because it usually signals the end of the paragraph and because it reminds him/her of your important points.

A concluding sentence can be a paraphrase (i.e. repetition of the topic sentence in different words) of the topic sentence or summary which is not specifically stated in the topic sentence.

Example: To summarize, Slash is very stylish rock guitarist in his period.

After constructing identification, descriptions, and conclusion, these three elements are further arranged into a descriptive paragraph. In arranging these elements, we, obviously, have to consider the two additional elements (i.e. unity and coherence). The paragraph will be as follows:

Examples:

Slash

Slash is one of my favourite guitar players. Even though his skill is not good enough, his style in playing guitar amazes me. He is tall; moreover, he has white skin with a hairy skull and his name tattooed on his right upper arm. Besides, he has special characteristic that differentiates him with other guitarists. For example, his long black curly hair covered by magician hat and tight skin pants always accompany him when he rocks his fans with 'Les Paul Gibson'. Instead of these, he also uses some accessories such as rings, silver bangles, skull necklace, and a gold 'nose ring' jabbed on the right nostril. To summarize, Slash is very stylish rock guitarist in his period.

Exercises: *Please describe the steps of writing a descriptive paragraph!*

2.3 Let's Practice

a. Recognizing Identification, Descriptions and Conclusion.

To improve your understanding about generic structure of a descriptive paragraph, now you try to identify and list identification, descriptions and conclusion of the following paragraph:

My Lovely Room

My room is very enjoyable for studying. My lovely room has 4 m² in width, and it is painted white. The light is suitable for studying particularly reading and writing; furthermore, the chair makes me comfortable. My room also has a small bookshelf in which all of my books are put. The bookshelf is placed on the right side of the door, so it is reachable when I am sitting on my chair. In spite of these, it also has good ventilation that makes air in my room always fresh. In summary, I love my room because it makes me comfortable, and it motivates me to study.

1 Topic Sentence

☐

2. Supporting Sentences

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☐

3. Concluding Sentence

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b.

Note: Lecturer asks three or five students to present or to write their paragraph in front of the class while the other students try to identify the three major structural parts of a good paragraph.

SUMMARY:

- ☐ A well-written descriptive paragraph has five elements: identification, descriptions, conclusion, unity and coherence. Instead of these a good descriptive paragraph should use imaginative language, use concrete/specific vocabularies, involve the readers, use appropriate transitional phrases, and consider the purpose and audience.
- ☐ After stating the identification, and then you have to provide some descriptions so that the reader will be able to picture the idea, and conclusion is drawn if it is necessary. Finally, to make the paragraph more interesting and understandable to read, these elements are well arranged to make it unity and coherence.

Descriptive Paragraph Checklist

- ☐ Form ____ Does your paragraph have a title?
 ____ Do you write the title correctly?
 ____ Do you use writing style accordingly?
- ☐ Identification ____ Does your paragraph contain an identification?
- ☐ Descriptions ____ Do your descriptions develop the identification?
- ☐ Conclusion ____ Does your paragraph have a conclusion?
- ☐ Unity ____ Does your paragraph develop one main idea?
- ☐ Coherence ____ Is it readable and understandable?
 ____ Do you use enough transitional signals?
- ☐ Structure and
Mechanics ____ Are all your sentences grammatically correct?
 ____ Do you use correct punctuation?

Part two: Practice

Activity 1

Read carefully the paragraph below and answer the questions.

My Son Joshua

My eight year old son, Joshua, stands out in a crowd of children because of his distinctive appearance and gentle manner. The first thing I notice when I look at him is his size. He stands at shoulder height next to me; indeed, he is a head taller than other children his age, and is definitely stronger. His weight is a hefty 113 pounds; without a doubt, he weighs forty pounds more than other children in his grade level. Recently, my husband signed him up for flag football, where he was told: "It is a good thing the children aren't playing tackle football, because he might inadvertently hurt the other kids." Also remarkable is his red hair; it is thick, coarse to touch, and styled in an old-fashioned boy cut. Hardly a person can pass Joshua without rubbing his head for good luck, and saying "Where'd ya get that hair?" Joshua's chubby face is fair, with freckles lightly dotting his exceptionally boyish features. His eyes are pale blue, and his eyebrows blond; in fact, white, in contrast with his red hair. His lips are full and somewhat feminine, and his newly-grown permanent teeth, which appear large alongside his remaining baby teeth, have a wide gap. His shoulders are broad, his chest juts out, and his belly is plump. His forearms are bulky, and will someday be powerful, yet his wrists retain the same creases he has had since he was a ten pound newborn. When we hold hands, his hands feel nearly as large as mine, and are unexpectedly soft. His legs are sturdy and strong, and his knees are covered with fresh scrapes and purple bruises, received while skateboarding and biking. His ankles are also solid; consequently, he can't wear boots. His feet are size 6 and wide; therefore, too wide for slip-on tennis shoes. Despite his appearance, Joshua is unexpectedly sensitive and caring; in fact, he still likes to sit on my lap, an awkward feat for me. He likes to open doors for me, tend his little brother, and help me grocery shop. From head to toe he is a contradiction; although he is only eight years old, he is big and strong, while loving and gentle, and that makes him stand out from other children, at least in my eyes.

Questions:

1. What is being described in the paragraph?
2. Underline the topic sentence
3. What aspects have been included in the description?

4. Extract all adjectives used in the description?

2. **Writing Your Own Descriptive Paragraph**

In order to make you more skillful in writing a paragraph, the following practice steps can be followed (Writing under pressure 15 minutes):

1. Choose the following titles:
 - My Classroom
 - My Dictionary
 - My Best Friend
2. Draw the identification from the title chosen.
3. Make at least four descriptions for your identification or main idea.
4. Conclude your paragraph.
5. Put your identification, descriptions, and conclusion together in the form of paragraph, and try to arrange them in unity and coherence.