



Writing a Paragraph

SALE: Write a series of related sentences about one topic.

Description

A paragraph is a well-organized set of sentences about one topic. In the primary grades, instruction begins with simple three-sentence paragraphs that contain a beginning, middle, and end. As students move through the primary grades, we want them to write each paragraph with a topic sentence that lets the reader know what the paragraph is about, several sentences in which they elaborate on the main idea, and a conclusion. Indentation is also introduced in the primary grades as a signal that writers use to let readers know they are switching to a new topic.

Getting to Know the Concept

In order to make the concept of a paragraph more concrete, you might want to use the following bicycle analogy, which we'll continue to build on in the model lesson. Enlarge a simple drawing of a person riding a bike and explain that a bicycle has three basic parts: the first part (front wheel and handlebars), the middle part (seat and pedals) and the last part (back wheel and brake). Let students know that a paragraph has three parts, too: the first part, the middle part, and the last part. To illustrate this point, write a simple paragraph on chart paper, such as the following:

On Saturday, I scored my first goal in soccer. Tommy kicked the ball to me, and I kicked it with all my might. It went right past the goalie and into the net.

After reading the paragraph aloud to the class, reread each sentence, associating it with the corresponding part of the bike. Point to the indentation at the beginning of the paragraph and remind students that we indent to show readers that we are starting a new paragraph and switching to a new topic.

Teaching the Concept With Literature

Since picture books often contain limited text or are written in justified (block) alignment, you may have to check several books to find an indented paragraph with three or four sentences about one topic to use as a model. Your best bet may be to create your own paragraph: *We just moved to a new apartment. I need to find a good place to put the music box my aunt gave me last year for my birthday. It will take me a while to get used to living in our new place.*

Model Lesson

Build on the simple bike analogy by pointing to the front tire and handlebars and saying,