

**Lesson
Ten**

Paragraphing

Aims

The aims of this lesson are to enable you to

- practise building paragraphs out of single ideas, using appropriate punctuation
- develop a topic in an interesting way, using examples, comparisons and contrasts
- conclude paragraphs effectively

Context

The previous lesson gave you practice in methods of linking ideas into sentences. The greater challenge comes when you have to combine ideas and sentences together into paragraphs. The ability to write a well-ordered paragraph could be one of the most important skills you ever learn, so take the time to follow this material thoroughly.

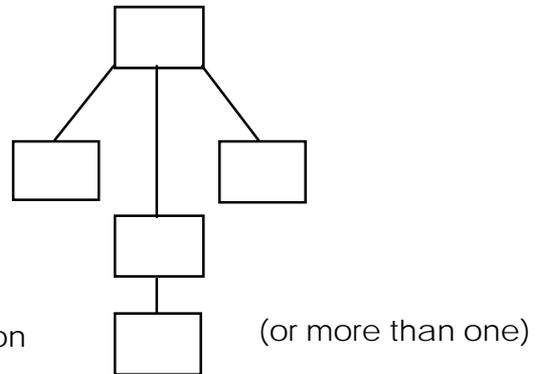


Oxford Open Learning

Paragraphs

Organising your writing and points into paragraphs is crucial in producing good argumentative essays. A good paragraph has links in meaning between its sentences (the most basic links are those we looked at at the start of Lesson One). The meaning of a paragraph at its most basic can consist of:

- a main statement
- supporting reasons
- qualification of the main statement
- a reason for this qualification



Activity 1

Put the sentences below into the correct order to make a paragraph with the structure of meaning shown in the diagram above:

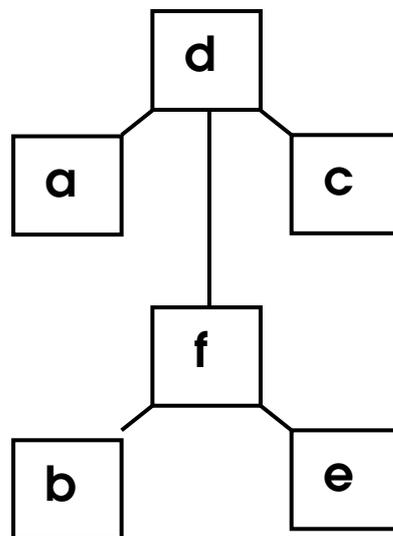
- (a) More people can read and write.
- (b) There are more schools but more pupils to fill them.
- (c) The farmers can grow much more food.
- (d) It seems that the developing nations have made great progress.
- (e) There is more food, but there are more mouths to eat it.
- (f) Real progress is prevented by population growth.



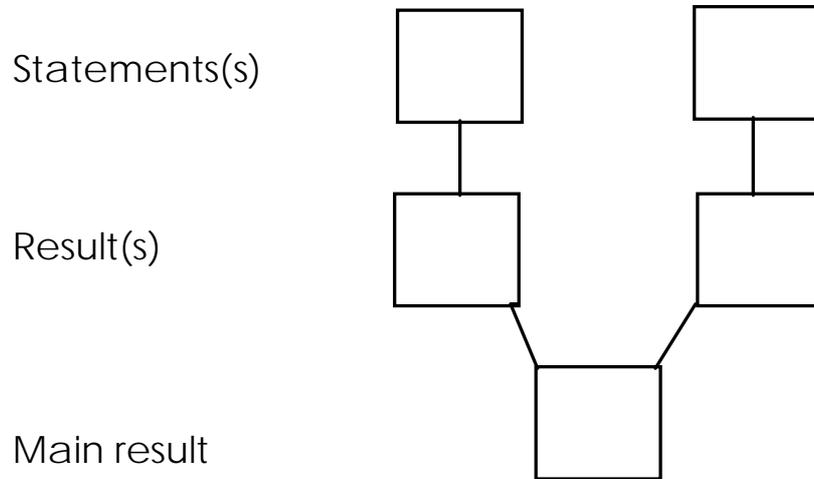
	
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Suggested Answer to Activity One

Your paragraph should have had sentences in the following organisation:



A slightly different kind of paragraph is one arguing one side of a case only; here you have a structure like this:



Activity 2

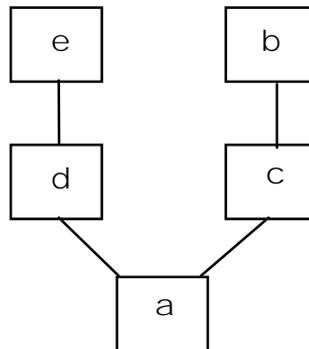
Repeat the method of Activity One for these sentences:

- (a) Cars should be prohibited in cities.
- (b) Cars are destroying our cities.
- (c) Cars fill the air with poison gas.
- (d) Cars can damage our health.
- (e) City centres are being knocked down to make way for new roads.



Suggested Answers to Activity Two

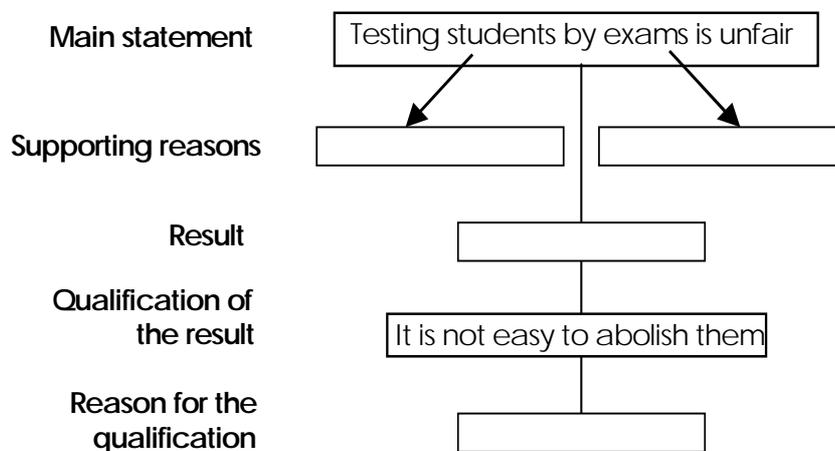
Your answer should involve the following order:



Note: check that both of your paragraphs make fluent use of connecting words and phrases.

Activity 3

Copy the diagram below and add statements of your own, of the right kind. Then write these up as a proper paragraph, including connecting words.



	
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Suggested Answer to Activity Three

Testing students by examinations is unfair because it puts too much stress on a small part of a student's performance and because some students fail to produce their best work under exam pressure. For these reasons, it would be preferable to abolish examinations, but this is not easy because they are an integral part of the present system and because other methods of assessment have comparable disadvantages.

Repetition

You should try not to use the same word again and again in a paragraph, as long as your alternative has the same meaning in that context.

Activity 4

Try to improve this paragraph by changing the italicised words to expressions which have the same meaning in their context:

Earthquakes have occurred somewhere almost every minute this year. Some have been very slight, but others, like the one which *occurred* in Sicily in March, were very severe. They *occur* in three regions of the Earth. One of the major *regions* is along the west coast of America. This is also *a region* in which there is a great variety of wildlife. Earthquakes are often caused by movement along an old crack in the rocks deep below the Earth's surface, or they may *be caused by* a new crack.

**Suggested Answer to Activity Four**

Earthquakes have occurred somewhere almost every minute this year. Some have been very slight, but others, like the one which hit Sicily in March, were very severe. They strike in three regions of the Earth. One of the major sites is along the West Coast of America. This is also an area in which there is a great variety of wildlife. Earthquakes are often caused by movement along an old crack in the rocks deep below the Earth's surface, or they may result from a new crack.

Examples

Giving examples in a discussion or argument can:

- help the reader to understand a difficult point
- develop very general statements into detail.

These words can be used to show the reader that you are giving an example (they are not always necessary).

Activity 5

Develop the following general statement into a short paragraph by adding examples of your own:

Animals serve us in various ways...



Suggested Answer to Activity Five

Animals serve us in various ways. Some perform menial tasks for us. For instance, the horse has been used for centuries to pull various vehicles such as a cart and also as a means of speedy transport. Another example is the donkey or ass, often used to carry things from one place to another. Other animals are a source of foodstuffs such as milk and eggs. Others, for example rats and monkeys, are often used in scientific experiments.

Activity 6

Combine the following statements into a passage of two paragraphs, each with the structure shown. Think of a title for the passage which gives its main idea.

Para 1:

- (1) Food builds up the body.
- (2) Not eating some food is important in many religions.
- (3) Food gives us energy.
- (4) Food is essential for life.
- (5) Food is important in other ways.
- (6) Eating together helps to make the family closer.

Para 2:

- (7) The world’s population is growing.
- (8) Scientists are looking for new sources of food.
- (9) Soya beans may also provide food for people.
- (10) The world’s food supplies are not increasing at the same rate.
- (11) Soya beans are an agricultural crop.
- (12) People are soon going to have to change their food habits.
- (13) Oil is a possible new food source.

(Note: parts of the diagram have been filled in to help you get started).

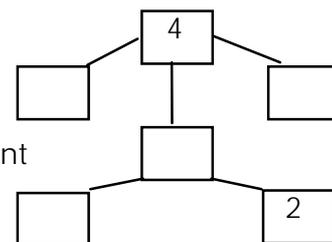
Paragraph 1

Main statement

Supporting reasons

Qualification of the main statement

Reasons for this qualification



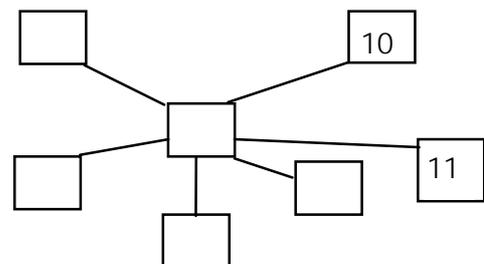
Paragraph 2

Statement

Result

Examples

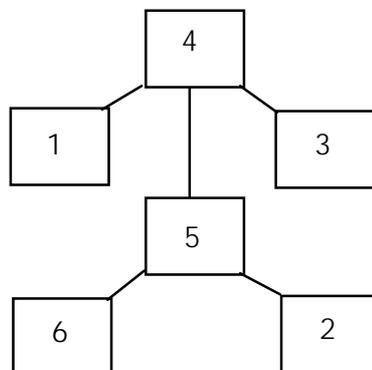
Main conclusion



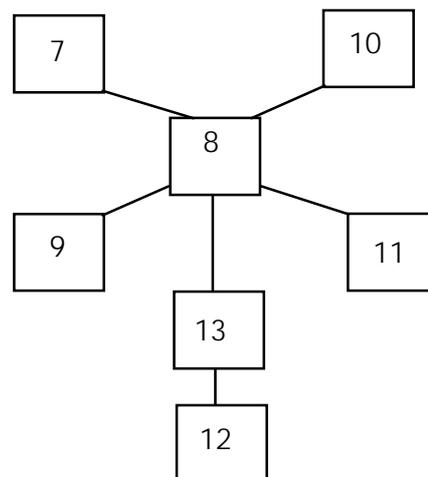
	
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Suggested Answer to Activity Six

Paragraph 1



Paragraph 2



Punctuation

Particularly in an essay discussing a topic or a series of views and opinions, the formal rules of punctuation should be observed (unlike, say, a poem or even an imaginative piece of prose).

The Colon (:)

A colon is normally used to tell the reader that what follows will make clear and explicit what has been suggested or generally implied in the first part of the sentence.

e.g.

1. We need the following: two batteries, a torch and one large haversack.
2. The message was short and to the point: the police have your description.

Semi Colon (;)

One main use of the semi colon is to separate two clauses that are balanced in structure and subject matter; it usually shows some degree of contrast. The clauses usually should be grammatically complete by themselves (not single words or phrases), e.g.:

'The story line must progress; the situation must change.'

Activity 7

Add suitable punctuation to the following sentences:

1. The reason was obvious they could not afford the fare
2. The summer is short and intense the winter is long but mild
3. Each team was allowed the following 10 kilos of food including fruit water salt and ample petrol
4. They made two important decisions the oldest houses would be pulled down the more recent ones would be repaired



Suggested Answers to Activity Seven

Your answers might have included the following punctuation:

1. The reason was obvious: they could not afford the fare.
2. The summer is short and intense; the winter is long but mild.
3. Each team was allowed the following: 10 kilos of food, including fruit; water; salt; and ample petrol.
4. They made two important decisions: the oldest houses would be pulled down, and more recent ones would be repaired.