

# Academic writing

## Lecture № 5

### Theme: Types of Paragraphs

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# Plan:

- ▶ 1. Descriptive and Process Paragraphs
- ▶ 2. Opinion paragraphs
- ▶ 3. Comparison/Contrast Paragraphs
- ▶ 4. Problem/Solution Paragraphs

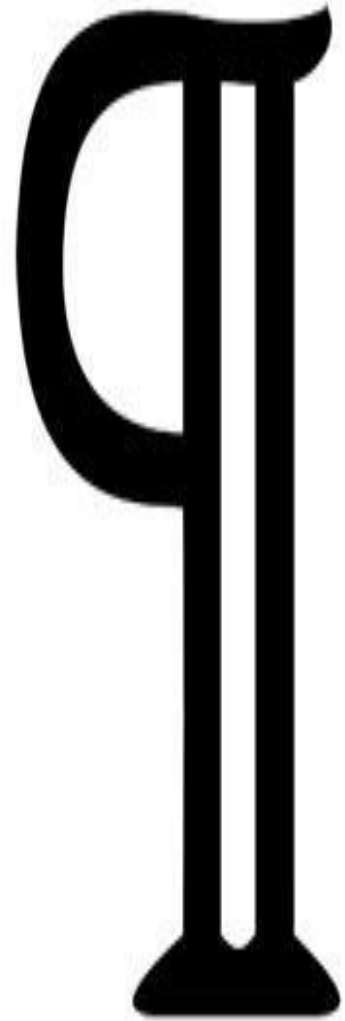
# 4 Types of Paragraphs

- Expository
- Descriptive
- Narrative
- Persuasive

## The Four Types of Paragraphs

Excerpt from: <http://home. insightbb.com/~dbriccola/persuasiveparagr.htm>

- 1) **Narrative:** tells the details of one main event
- 2) **Descriptive:** paints a picture, only using words, about what a person, place, or thing is like
- 3) **Expository:** presentation of information, opinions, or ideas / it exposes something about a topic
- 4) **Persuasive:** when expressing an opinion, you attempt to persuade someone that you are right. A persuasive paragraph is developed with reasons based on facts.



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# Paragraph Examples

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Narrative Descriptive Expository Argument

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Compare/Contrast

Process

Problem/Solution

Cause/Effect

Informational

[PatternBasedWriting.com](http://PatternBasedWriting.com)

# Descriptive and Process Paragraphs

- ▶ A descriptive paragraph explains how someone or something looks or feels.

## What is a descriptive paragraph?

- A descriptive paragraph is a paragraph that describes a *person, place or thing*.
- Using this description allows the reader to form a better mental image of the whatever is being described.

## Writing a Descriptive Paragraph

- **Make sure to choose a meaningful person, place, or thing.**
  - Before you begin your paragraph, you have to be sure to pick something that is worth describing.
- **Introduce the person, place, or thing you are describing.**
  - If you want to get the reader's attention, then you should let him or her know what you're describing as soon as possible instead of leaving them guessing.

# Descriptive Paragraph

Descriptive type of paragraphs are written in such a way to describe something with words that allow your reader to imagine the scene what you're describing. It is a text full of detailed observations. They are recorded, using sensory language. Descriptions are like narrative paragraphs, with visual characteristics unfolding in a dramatic way.

Example:

"The **petite young** girl merrily skipped around the **blossoming, fragrant** bushes."

Try to use descriptive adjectives to really paint a picture of each noun you write. Pick out strong action verbs so that the reader can see and feel the action in the paragraph. You can compare your subject to other things to help paint your picture. You want to be sure to focus on only one subject so that you can take the time to describe it fully.



# Strategies for Writing a Descriptive Paragraph

- Uses words that help readers see, hear, feel, smell and sometimes taste what is happening.
- Includes plenty of details.
- Expresses how the writer feels.





# Adjectives for Places

- remote, imposing, superb, easily accessible, inaccessible, peaceful, interesting, memorable, awe-inspiring, world-famous, off the beaten track, little/much visited, tourist-ridden, beautiful, picturesque, isolated, breath-taking, pretty, bustling sleepy, lively, sparsely populated

# Revise personality adjectives

Positive Qualities	Negative Qualities
patient	boring
ambitious	pessimistic
generous	mean
mature	hostile
interesting	immature
friendly	impatient
tactful	short-tempered
good-natured	deceitful
thick-skinned	shy
easy-going	aggressive
hard-working	reserved
fair	
helpful	
outgoing	
polite	
cheerful	

Description of physical appearance should move from the most general aspects to the most specific details:

details

- height/build
- age
- facial features
- hair
- clothes

*John is a tall, slim man in his mid forties.*

*He has a thin face, blue eyes and a large nose.*

*His short hair is greying at the temples.*

*He is usually casually dressed.*

- Identify the details above in [Mavis's description](#)



# Process Essay

- In a process paper you either write about the steps the reader needs to take to do something, or you describe how something is done. If you see the following key words in your prompt, be sure to write a Process Essay.
  - Describe how “X” is done.
  - List the steps involved in (preparing) “X”.
  - Explain what happened in “X”.
  - What is the procedure involved in (preparing) “X”?
- Example:
  - Write an essay describing the steps in preparing for Eid Al Adha.

What should a process essay look like?

# Process Essay

- Process Analysis is a “how to do it” essay.
- You show in words how to do things: what steps are taken from beginning to end.
- Finally, you tell what you will have when the process is finished.
- Transition words: first, second, afterwards, before, then..

# Transitions

## Process Essay Transitions

- |            |                                |
|------------|--------------------------------|
| -First...  | -The first step is...          |
| -Second... | -After that...                 |
| -Next...   | -Before doing the next step... |
| -Then...   | -The last step is...           |
| -Last...   | -Finally                       |


## Transition Words

First Detail	First	To start
	For example	To begin
Middle Details	Also	In addition
	Next	Second
	Plus	Third
Last Detail	Finally	Last
	Last but not least	
Concluding Sentence	In conclusion	
	To summarize	
	As you can see	

## ***Process Paragraph Examples***

**Begin, by combing  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup peanut butter and 1 cup chocolate chips in a microwave safe bowl, microwave for 1 minute. Than, stir to blend all ingredients thoroughly. Next, add  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon vanilla, place the 9 cups of chex cereal in a very large bowl. Now, pour the peanut butter chocolate mixture over the cereal and toss evenly, making sure all the cereal gets a good covering. Finely, coat with powdered sugar, sprinkling evenly over the cereal and tossing as you sprinkle to cover each piece well.**



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- ▶ 1. Descriptive and Process Paragraphs
  - ▶ 2. Opinion paragraphs
  - ▶ 3. Comparison/Contrast Paragraphs
  - ▶ 4. Problem/Solution Paragraphs

# Opinion paragraphs

## What are opinion paragraphs?

- **They are paragraphs in which you have to present your personal opinion on a particular topic.**
- **You must state your opinion clearly and support it with appropriate reasons and examples.**
- **Your idea is expressed through three sections:**
  - **Introduction (or beginning) in which you explain your idea**
  - **Main body, or supportive ideas, in which you make your point through examples**
  - **Conclusion, an ending, in which you give a transition to your arguments.**

# OPINION PARAGRAPH

- You give your ideas about a topic
- Introduce your opinion in the first sentence (Topic sentence)
- You make the reader agree with your opinion, so you need to support your opinion with reasons and supporting details
- End your paragraph with a strong concluding sentence



## THE INTRODUCTION

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This is the first paragraph of your essay, in which you are supposed to introduce the subject and to state your opinion clearly.

To state your opinion, these are the language structures you may use:

*I believe/feel/think that... From my point of view...To my mind/way of thinking...As far as I am concerned...In my opinion/view...I am totally against...I completely disagree with...I don't agree with..It seems/appears to me that...I (completely) agree with/that...*

## An opinion essay

### Are video games a good way to keep fit?

Nowadays, many teenagers have got video consoles at home and they often like playing active video games. These are good for you for a number of reasons.

**First of all,** **I think that** active video games are a good way to keep fit. There are lots of different types of exercise you can do such as basketball, water-skiing and dance and, what's more, you can play them in the comfort of your own home. **In my opinion,** these games are fun and interactive because you can play them with friends and, if you play online, you don't need to be in the same place as your friend to play.

**In addition,** you can play them whenever you want. **Some people think** that it's better to do exercise outside in the fresh air. Although this is true, it's actually difficult to play outside when it's raining or very hot so video games are a good alternative.

**To sum up,** **I believe that** video games are a fun and social way to keep fit. I think they are a good option when you can't play outside and they might encourage people to do more exercise.

### Top Tips for writing

1. Write your essay in clear paragraphs. Use phrases like *First of all*, *In addition* and *To sum up* to start each paragraph.
2. Express your own opinion using *I think*, *In my opinion* or *I believe*. Mention other viewpoints with phrases like *Some people think* and say whether you agree or disagree with them.

# Comparison/Contrast Paragraphs

## Compare and Contrast



**Comparing** is telling how two or more things are alike.

Authors use clue words such as *similar to*, *like*, or *as* to compare.

**Contrasting** is telling how two or more things are different.

Authors use clue words such as *different from*, *but*, or *unlike* to contrast.

# Characteristics of a Compare & Contrast Paragraph

- Explains or describes two or more people, places, things, or events.
- Compares by telling how the two people, places, things, or events are alike.
- Contrasts by telling how the two people, places, things or events are different.
- Uses clue words - both, also, too, as well, on the other hand, however, but, and while to help readers understand the similarities and differences.

# COMPARE & CONTRAST

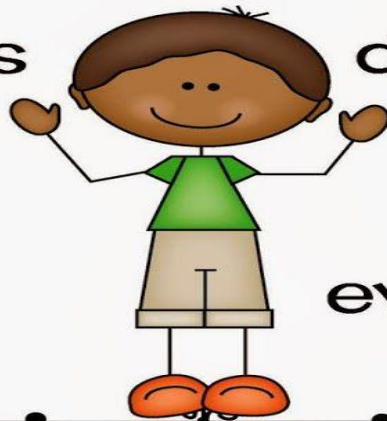
## Signal Words

### **COMPARE**

same  
the same as  
similar  
similarly  
also  
too  
as well as  
likewise  
also  
both

### **CONTRAST**

but  
however  
while  
on the other hand  
different  
difference  
differently  
like  
although  
even though



# Compare and Contrast

## Apples and Oranges

### Alike

1. Both fruits
2. Have skin
3. Healthy

### Different

1. Oranges have more acid.
2. Apple has thinner skin

Comparing \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are alike in several ways. Both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have similar \_\_\_\_\_. Both also \_\_\_\_\_ as well as \_\_\_\_\_. On the other hand, one way they differ is \_\_\_\_\_. Another difference is \_\_\_\_\_. Although they share \_\_\_\_\_, only \_\_\_\_\_ is the \_\_\_\_\_-est.

## Comparison & Contrast

There are several ways I can refer to the eating habits of some of my friends in Canada and in Brazil. Based on my observations, Canadians love meat and potatoes; **however**, Brazilians **prefer** rice and beans. Unlike Americans who **favour** apple pie for dessert, **both** Canadians **and** Brazilians seem to prefer crème brulee and crème caramel. In sum, these are some of the many ways I can state some differences and similarities of the eating habits of some of my friends from Brazil and from Canada.

# Problem/Solution Paragraphs

- ▶ Problem/solution writing first explains a problem and then proposes one or more solutions to that problem.





## An SPSE Essay

### Introduction

Outline background and aims

### Situation

Background and context for the problem

### Problem

What is the problem and its effects?

### Solution

Two or more potential solutions

### Evaluation

How effective are the solutions?  
Which is most effective?

### Conclusion

Summarise all main points

### Essay 1

*" All over the world, societies are facing a growing problem with obesity. This problem affects both children and adults. What are the reasons for this rise in obesity, How could it be tackled? "*

- Plan:

Intro

Problem 1: fast food + solution + example

Problem 2: lack of exercise + solution + example

Conclusion

Retrieved from <http://ieltsfocus.com/2017/03/13/ielts-writing-task-2-problem-solution-essay/>

# Introduction

Past situation: definition / problems	The last years in the whole World the obesity in children has been increasing in an alarming way.
Present situation: solutions	Nowadays many countries are trying to do something to make their children's life healthier. Obesity affects psychologically and physically that is why we need to change this situation.
This essay will (Essay outline)	This essay looks at some of the effects of obesity on children, and suggests some solutions to the problem.

## Paragraph 2: Solutions

Topic Sentence	There are many things that we can do to stop obesity but the most important is to create a nutritional culture at an early age.
Rules	That is to implement in elementary school certain rules about the kind of food that can be sold.
Rules	
Examples 1-2	For example just fruit and nutritious meals. It is difficult to achieve this goal, but it is not impossible with the help of the government.
Exercising program	Also; an exercising program is needed. It should be implemented in elementary school as a complement o the nutritional culture for children. This program must arouse a sport spirit in them through sport clubs, which are going to be free.
Example 1-2	
Optional	Nevertheless, these activities will be obligatory in public schools and with a minimum of 4 hours per week. It is certain that this can work.

## Paragraph 3: Problems

Topic Sentence	Obesity causes multiple problems in children.
Physical effects/ Example 1	Physically children's health is affected by a variety of illnesses like hypertension, diabetes or fatigue in excess.
Psychological effects/ Example 1	Psychologically the most important effects are depression and low self-esteem.
Financial effects/ Example 1	Another effect is the financial effect by which children abuse the budget of their families in buying foods and drinks and getting treatment to return fit.
Optional	These effects have a direct impact in the way in which children are going to interact with society.

# Conclusion

Topic Sentence	In sum,
Summary of essay: problem: solution	obesity in children can be solved by taking action in the nutritional education of children and in the way that they see sports.
Future statement	As a result, children in the world are going to grow healthier and with a different mentality about what they should and should not eat, and what they have to do to keep their body and mind healthy.

# Problem/Solution Structure

## **Introduction**

Paraphrase the question

Introduce the specific topics that will be discussed in the main body paragraphs.

## **Main Body Paragraph 1**

Introduce the problem (topic sentence)

Explain/give detail

Example

## **Main Body Paragraph 2**

Introduce the solution (topic sentence)

Explain/give detail

Example

## **Conclusion**

Summary of the main points

What you think is most important about this topic / give a recommendation



# Problem-Solution Paragraph:

## *Homelessness*

The number of people who are homeless in the United States is too high. According to the website, some reasons why people are homeless are decreases in public assistance, such as Social Security; low wages; and mental or emotional disorders, such as Severe Depression. Although there is no true solution to prevent homelessness, people can help. A few ways are by donating money to the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH), donating an item from the NCH website wish list, or purchasing a book from the NCH website. In conclusion, donating money and/or items can help organizations bring awareness to the public, which could lead to more aid for the homeless.

Formal style

## The structure of a for/against essay.

### I. Introduction (without giving your opinion) .

- The topic/ problem
- 2. General view

### II. The body of an essay (2 or 3 paragraphs).

- 1. Point **for** + reasons/examples (2-3)
- 2. Points **against** + reasons/examples (2-3)

### III. Conclusion.

- A balanced consideration of the topic
- Your opinion

[See examples](#)



### Reality TV shows are good entertainment

Reality shows are a very popular form of entertainment on TV nowadays. There are dozens of different types of programmes such as singing contests, cooking competitions or going to live in the jungle.

**Firstly**, I think that there is a lot of variety in reality TV. People at home can choose which types of programme they want to watch depending on what they are interested in. Some people like watching singing or cooking competitions while others prefer watching programmes about building houses or travelling around the world. **In addition**, reality TV programmes are a great opportunity to discover talented singers, dancers or chefs. Several people who take part in these programmes get jobs as a result of being on TV. **Another advantage is that** the people on the shows have interesting experiences and meet new people.

**On the other hand**, some people think that reality TV is an easy way for them to become famous. **However**, most successful singers, actors or chefs have worked hard all their lives and are good at their job because of their hard work. **Also**, sometimes the people on the shows have to do really difficult or dangerous things. The competitions are very hard and there is only one winner. **Another disadvantage is that** some programmes always follow the same format and this can be boring to watch.

**To sum up**, I think that reality TV is good entertainment. There is lots of variety which means there is something for everyone and they are interesting to watch.

### Top Tips for writing

1. Start each paragraph with a word or phrase so the reader knows what to expect, for example *Firstly*, *On the other hand* or *To sum up*.
2. Link your sentences with these words.
3. Organise your essay in paragraphs.
  - paragraph 1 – introduction
  - paragraph 2 – arguments for the subject
  - paragraph 3 – arguments against the subject
  - paragraph 4 – conclusion