

Name: _____

English 9, Period ____

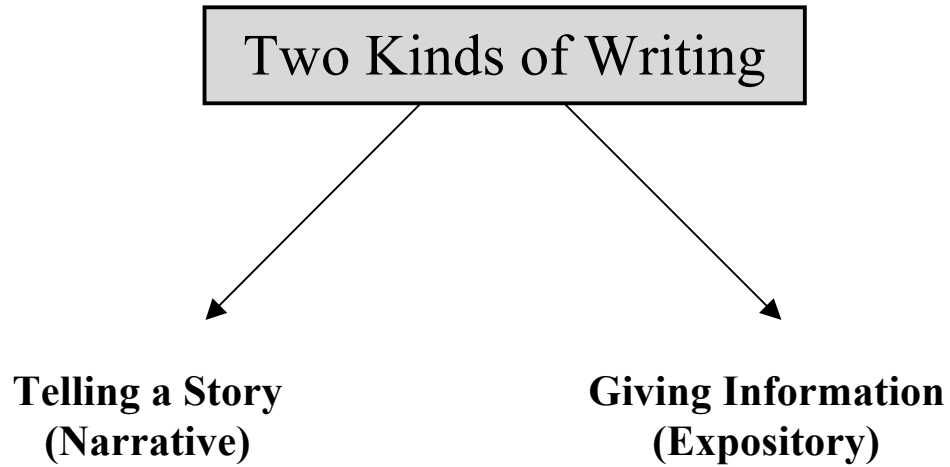
Mrs. Krajewski

Step Up to Writing

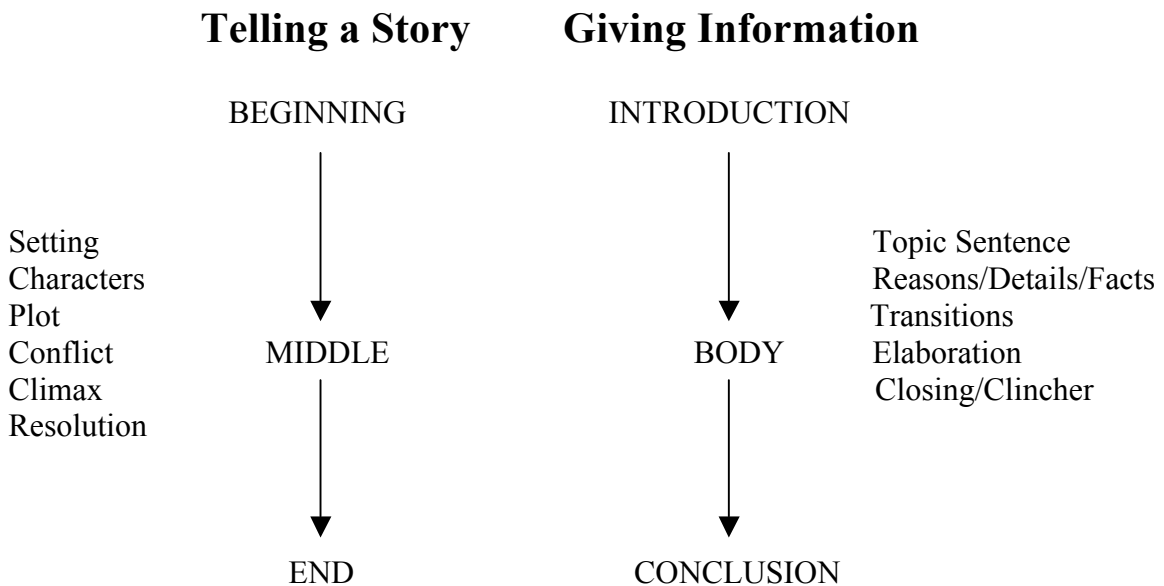
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There are TWO main kinds of writing: narratives and expository pieces.



Important Differences:



Below are two examples of writing. One is an expository piece and one is a narrative.

Telling a Story – A Narrative

from *A Shocker on Shock Street*
By R. L. Stine

Marty and I jumped to our feet.
“Ohhhhh.” I heard Marty let
out a frightened moan.

I started to back away. I
thought maybe I could scramble out
the other side of the car.

But the snarling, growling
monsters came at us from both sides.

“L-leave us alone!” I
stammered.

A monster covered in tangled
brown fur opened his jaws to reveal
long, jagged rows of yellow teeth.
His hot breath exploded in my face.

Giving Information - Explaining

Spanish Explorers

After Christopher Columbus’s
voyages to the New World, many Spaniards
came to this continent to explore. One
Spanish explorer was Ponce de Leon. He
traveled through present-day Florida to find
the Fountain of Youth. A second explorer,
Coronado, searched for the Seven Cities of
Gold. He and his men traveled for three
years. They did not find the cities of gold,
but they did find the villages of the Pueblo
who lived in the Southwest. They also saw
the Grand Canyon. A third explorer was
Hernando De Soto. De Soto traveled
through Florida and then traveled west as
far as the Mississippi River. He and his men
were the first people from Spain to explore
the Mississippi. These three men were only
a few of the many people who explored the
New World.

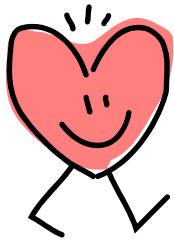
**The difference between an introduction and the
beginning of a story:**

An introduction is not at all like the beginning of a story. An
introduction tells the reader *what to expect and what information will be
shared*. The beginning of a story *pulls the reader into the story*; it does not
always give the reader advance warning of what is to come.

Elements of Expository Writing

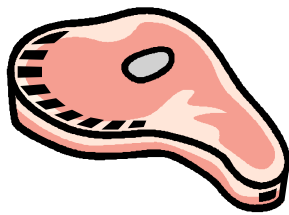
(These “elements” fit all types of essays.)

Organization is the key.



Topic sentences are the heart.

Transitions are the glue for the key ideas.



Examples, evidence, and explanations are the meat.

Conclusions tie it all together.





Organization: Do You Recognize the Difference?

The following examples were written by middle school students. Examples 1a and 1b are responses to the book *Tuck Everlasting*. These examples illustrate the differences between writing that is organized and writing that has “good ideas but no organization.”

Example 1a (Good ideas but no organization)

Tuck Everlasting

(seventh grade)

Tuck Everlasting is mainly about life. What I mean about this is that the Tuck family fell off the wheel of life. The Tuck family drank some water from a special spring that kept them living forever. During the story Tuck and Winnie had a talk about this. Winnie had been kidnapped by the Tucks and she could have lived with them forever. At the end of the book Winnie gives the frog the water. He then falls off the wheel of life. In conclusion, I thought the book was good and explained life very well.

Example 1b (Good ideas and good organization)

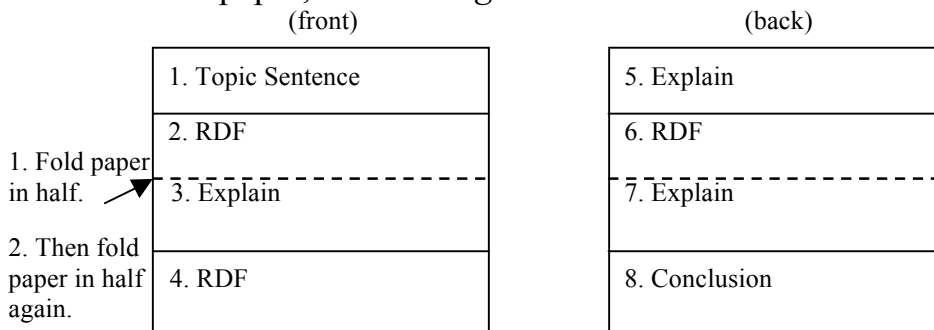
Life Is Good

(seventh grade)

When I read *Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbitt, I was forced to think about life, death, and the possibility of living forever. First, I learned that life is a good thing, and I shouldn't spend time thinking about dying. I also realized that I wouldn't be really happy living forever. Life is like a wheel, and if I lived forever, I would see things change but I would not change. Finally, I saw that death is not so bad. When a person dies, it's like the world is going a step further, moving on, and developing new things. Before I read this book, I was afraid to die, but now I believe it's not anything to be afraid of.

Organizing with Accordion Paragraphs

Directions: Fold a piece of lined paper in an **Accordion Fold**. On each section of the paper, write a *single sentence*.

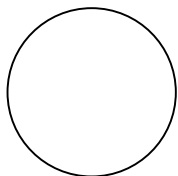




How to Organize Writing Using Colors of a Traffic Signal

GREEN

(go)

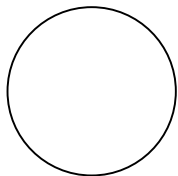


Topic Sentence

- Green means “go.”
- Green asks the writer to decide, “What am I going to prove?” “What am I going to explain?” “What information will I share?”

YELLOW

(slow down)

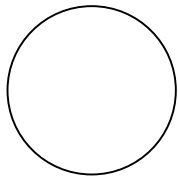


Reasons/Details/Facts (RDFs)

- Yellow means “slow down.”
- Yellow identifies key ideas—reasons, details or facts.
- Yellow introduces key concepts—reasons, details or facts.

RED

(stop)

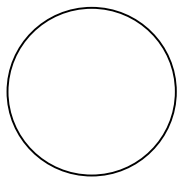


Explain

- Red means “stop and explain” the Yellows.
- Red presents evidence to prove the Yellows.
- Red provides explanations and examples.

GREEN

(go back)



Conclusion

- Green means “go back to your topic.”
- Green means restate the topic and the position.
- Do NOT introduce new information.
- Use synonyms (words that mean the same thing) and leave your reader with something to remember.



Organization Game

Cut up the squares below and organize them correctly.

One square will be the **theme.*

jelly	juice	lunch
dessert	potato chips	ice cream
dinner	corn on the cob	pancakes
popsicle	toast	apple
syrup	cereal	meals
cookies	cake	oatmeal
gravy	green beans	grilled chicken
pizza	breakfast	salad
applesauce	sandwich	french toast
mashed potatoes	banana bread	milk



Accordion Paragraphs

Accordion Paragraphs can be any length (up to 14 sentences) and any combination of colors. Two, three or four yellows may be used.

8 SENTENCE PARAGRAPH

Topic Sentence (Green)

Reason/Detail/Fact (Yellow)

Explain (Red)

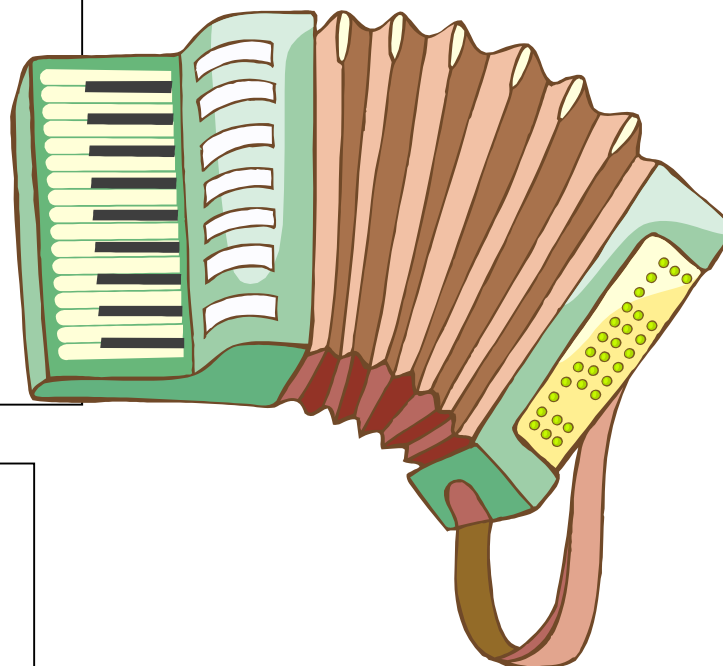
Reason/Detail/Fact (Yellow)

Explain (Red)

Reason/Detail/Fact (Yellow)

Explain (Red)

Conclusion (Green)



7 SENTENCE PARAGRAPH

Topic Sentence (Green)

Reason/Detail/Fact (Yellow)

Explain (Red)

Reason/Detail/Fact (Yellow)

Explain (Red)

Explain (Red)

Conclusion (Green)

6 SENTENCE PARAGRAPH

Topic Sentence (Green)

Reason/Detail/Fact (Yellow)

Explain (Red)

Reason/Detail/Fact (Yellow)

Explain (Red)

Conclusion (Green)

NOTE: There can ALWAYS be more than one RED after each YELLOW.



HOW TO WRITE A STRONG TOPIC SENTENCE

A topic sentence in a paragraph presents the writer's *reason for writing*, and tells the reader what the writer plans to *prove or explain*. The purpose of a topic sentence is to identify the **topic** (the occasion—the reason for writing) and the **position** (your opinion—what you plan to prove or explain).

What do I need to remember about topic sentences?

1. Topic sentences are used in information/expository writing.
2. Topic sentences can be written in any tone: serious, humorous, threatening, encouraging, inspiring, etc.
3. The tone of the topic sentence depends on the purpose of the paragraph or paper, as well as the audience.
4. Topic sentences can be very short. *Example: I love volleyball.*
5. Topic sentences can be long and elaborate. *Example: I may be the shortest, least coordinated player on our varsity volleyball team, but I am, without a doubt, the most passionate.*
6. Paragraph assignments in all subject areas require strong, clear topic sentences.

1. OCCASION/POSITION STATEMENTS

An **occasion/position statement** is a complex (two-part) topic sentence that begins with one of these words or phrases:

After	As soon as	Even though	So that	Whenever
Although	Because	If	Though	Where
As	Before	In order that	Unless	Wherever
As if	Even	In order to	Until	Whether
As long as	Even if	Since	When	While



The Occasion:

- ❑ Is the first part of the topic sentence
- ❑ Introduces your reason for writing
- ❑ Can be any event, problem, idea, solution, or circumstance that gives you a reason to write
- ❑ Is the dependent clause in the complex sentence

The Position:

- ❑ Is the second part of the topic sentence
- ❑ States what you plan to prove or explain in your paragraph
- ❑ Is the independent clause in the complex sentence

Examples (the plain text indicates the occasion; *the italics text indicates the position*):

1. Although my family and I have taken many wonderful vacations, *none was more fun and exciting than our camping trip to the Grand Canyon.*
2. Although I don't like most vegetables, *there are some that I eat all the time.*

Mastering Occasion/Position Statements

OCCASION	POSITION
When I have free time,	
Because all students deserve a good education,	
Whenever I am faced with a difficult decision,	
If you are looking for a great place to vacation,	



2. POWER/NUMBER STATEMENTS

A **power/number statement** is a type of topic sentence that contains a number word. The number word is the focus of the sentence; it tells the reader that a list of information will follow. Power/number statements can be short or long.

Helpful number words:

a couple of	a number of	numerous	some
a few	four	plenty of	three
various	many	several	two

*Make sure to **avoid starting power/number statements with *there are, these are, or here are.*** Instead, start a power/number statement with a ***who, what, where, or when.***

Examples:

TOPIC = FRIENDS

<u>Who</u>	1. Mary and her sister Margaret are my <i>two</i> best friends. 2. The new recruits learned <i>four</i> important procedures.
<u>What</u>	1. The word friendship means <i>two</i> things. 2. <i>Three</i> cities have serious pollution problems.
<u>Where</u>	1. At school I have <i>several</i> good friends. 2. Like most American cities, Los Angeles, is faced with <i>many</i> problems including homelessness, gang violence, and unemployment.
<u>When</u>	1. Last summer my best friend Joe traveled to <i>three</i> unusual places. 2. In the winter I enjoy watching <i>several</i> high school sports.



Example Power/Number Statements:

1. My friends have *many* different kinds of pets.
 2. Kids should remember *two* rules when they cross the street.
 3. At the zoo I saw *a number* of unusual animals.
-

3. However Statements

However is one of several conjunctive adverbs that can help organize your thoughts into a topic sentence. You will use *however* in the middle of the sentence. Place a semicolon (;) before the word *however* and a comma (,) after the word *however*.

Examples:

1. The new rules for the school cafeteria seemed unfair to the students; *however*, the rules have made the cafeteria a better place to eat lunch.
2. My father is very strict; *however*, he has good reasons for all of his rules.
3. Most Americans want to eliminate crime; *however*, it will take a great deal of money, time and effort to reach this goal.
4. Ants are very small creatures and may seem insignificant; *however*, scientists around the world study these insects.

***There are many other conjunctive adverbs besides *however*. Try one of these as you think about your topic:**

as a result	in fact	meanwhile	otherwise
consequently	instead	nevertheless	still
furthermore	likewise	next	therefore

Examples:

1. The new Little League coaches were not happy with the old practice schedule; *instead*, they presented a plan that gave each team equal access to the practice field.
2. Hundreds of students were arriving late to class each day; *therefore*, the faculty created a plan that would punish those who were tardy and reward those who came to class on time.



4. And, But, and Or Statements

Like the *However* Statement, this method also creates a compound sentence. With coordinating conjunctions—*and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, *so*, *yet*, and *for*—you can easily write a topic sentence. Remember to use a COMMA before the conjunction.

HINT: You can use the words *boy fans* to help you remember these conjunctions.

b = but	f = for
o = or	a = and
y = yet	n = nor
	s = so

Examples:

1. Some people find it difficult to program a DVD player, ***but*** most will succeed if they just remember to follow these guidelines.
2. Reptiles are all alike because they have backbones, breathe with lungs, and have scales, ***yet*** reptiles come in a variety of sizes and shapes.

5. A Few Good Prepositions

The following is a list of **prepositions**. Once you learn to write Occasion/Position Statements and However Statements, try this list. Like the Occasion/Position list, these words can jog your thinking and push you into a great topic sentence.

According to	Before	For	Instead of	Outside	Until
Along with	Besides	From	Inside	Over	With
After	Beyond	In	Like	Since	Within
Among	Due to	In addition to	Near	Through	Without
Because of	Despite	In case of	Of	Throughout	With the
By	During	In spite of	On	Under	exception of

Examples:

1. ***Throughout*** the campaign the senator made promises to improve health care.
2. ***With*** determination and skill, the Blue Jays won the state championship.



6. To, Plus a Verb

Try to use an **infinitive** to start your paper. An infinitive is the main verb preceded by the word *to*. Some examples of infinitives are *to succeed*, *to accomplish*, *to finish*, *to win*, and *to teach*. Topic sentences with infinitives are clear and direct. They won't confuse the reader.

Examples:

1. *To succeed* in businesses, a person must establish clear but realistic goals.
2. *To keep* in contact with friends and family, many teens invest in cell phones.

**Note that "to plus a verb" is always at the beginning of the sentence.*

7. List Statements

A common method of writing a topic sentence is to list the categories you will address in your paragraph. Two of the ways you can accomplish this are:

1. A list of words:

When I set out to buy my new car, I looked for a vehicle that was reliable, safe, and economical.

2. A list of phrases:

My grandparents prefer to vacation in Mexico, in the Northwest, and in the Bahamas.

8. Get Their Attention

A **Declarative Statement** uses a strong verb (action word).

Examples:

1. Children *love* the new flavored cereals.
2. Fourth grade test scores at Lincoln Elementary *soared*.
3. Teachers' salaries must be *increased*.



9. A Rhetorical Question

A **Rhetorical Question** is a kind of question we ask when we want to get someone's attention, but we do not really expect an answer. *The rhetorical question is always followed by a statement that answers the question.*

Examples:

1. What is your school doing to improve test scores? Our school has purchased an exciting new literacy program.
 2. How are churches and synagogues meeting the needs of teenagers? In our city, they provide places to gather, help with homework, and scholarships for summer camp.
-

10. Side-by-Side Statements

Sometimes using two simple sentences—*one for the occasion and one for the position*—is the right way to go. It is especially powerful if your goal is to put emphasis on your *position*.

Examples:

1. A little stress may be good. Too much is dangerous.
 2. Throwing a party is a challenge. Planning ahead can prevent stress.
-

11. Two Nouns and Two Commas

When we set off a noun or a noun phrase with commas, we call it an **appositive**. An appositive does not have a verb; it is simply a noun followed by a description that tells more about the noun.

These sentences are fun and easy to create. They also help writers put more important or interesting information into one sentence.

Examples:

1. The medulla, *an important part of the brain*, controls your breathing.
2. Two rivers, *the Missouri and the Mississippi*, are important to the people in Iowa.



12. Using a Quotation

Using a quotation in a topic sentence is an easy, yet powerful, way to start a paper.

Using the words that are on the Occasion/Position list (*page 9*) might help you integrate the quotation.

Examples:

1. Although I usually appreciate the advice I receive from my grandmother, I wish that she would follow the advice of Horace: “*Whatever advice you give, be short.*”
2. If you are tempted to give your best friend advice, at least be aware of the proverb that says, “*Never give advice in a crowd.*”

Don’t Get Caught in the “Things” Trap

When you write topic sentences, you may find yourself using the word *things* too much. To move away from this problem, try one of the words in the list below, or any other words that fit the subject of your paper.

abilities	conflicts	ideas	places	sections
actions	contributions	impressions	points	situations
advances	corrections	improvements	powers	skills
advantages	details	incidents	problems	successes
adventures	difficulties	items	projects	surprises
agreements	effects	matters	promises	talents
attributes	events	movements	qualities	themes
behaviors	experiences	occasions	reasons	thoughts
benefit	facts	occurrences	remedies	troubles
characteristics	features	parts	resources	types
choices	feelings	performances	responses	
concerns	frustrations	periods	rules	



Examples:

Weak: As I read about Ben Franklin, I learned many *things* about his life.

Better: As I read about Ben Franklin, I learned that his life was filled with *challenges*.

Weak: The article we read told three *things* about the White House.

Better: The article we read in History class described three *features* of the White House.

Weak: Our principal did two *things* to encourage all of the students to read more.

Better: Our principal started two *projects* to encourage more reading in every classroom.

Practice Writing Topic Sentences

Directions: Write two different topic sentences for each topic. *You may not use one of the 12 methods more than once.*

***Make sure to state which type of topic sentence each one is first.**

Topic: family pets

1. Type: _____ Sentence: _____

2. Type: _____ Sentence: _____

Topic: cell phones

3. Type: _____ Sentence: _____

4. Type: _____ Sentence: _____



Topic: high school sports

5. Type: _____ Sentence: _____

6. Type: _____ Sentence: _____

Topic: drinking and driving

7. Type: _____ Sentence: _____

8. Type: _____ Sentence: _____

Topic: music

9. Type: _____ Sentence: _____

10. Type: _____ Sentence: _____



Transitions in the RDFs (Yellows)

Transitions are words and phrases used in expository writing to let readers know that a new idea is being introduced. In the Accordion method, you should use a transition to introduce a new **reason, detail, or fact** (RDF).

Transitions *should not* always be the first word in a sentence. Sometimes we **bury transitions**, which means the transition is placed somewhere in the sentence other than the first word.

Example:

First, I went to visit my grandmother.

Visiting my grandmother in Vermont was the *first* big event of my summer.

***Remember to stay away from writing *First is* or *Second is*!**

WRONG: *First is* great service.

RIGHT: The *first* feature we like about the restaurant is the great service.

Practice: Can you find the transitions?

Directions: Read over the paragraphs below, and then using a yellow highlighter, highlight the transitions.

Paragraph #1

Saturdays With My Family and Our Dog, Jake

On Saturdays I like to do two things. First, I like to sleep in because I usually stay up late on Friday night. I also like to take walks in the park with my family and our dog, Jake. Saturdays are great!

Paragraph #2

Good Friends

When I am with my friends, we have a great time. First of all, we like to laugh. We tell stories and laugh at all the silly parts of our stories. Sometimes we go shopping together. We might buy things or we might just look around. My friends and I also play games. Our favorite game is Left, Right Center. Finally, we like to watch videos together.



The E's (Reds)

Transitions are important, but they are only a small part of the RDFs in each paragraph (the YELLOWS) that lead to **the most important part**: *the specific examples and explanations (E's or Reds) that prove and support your topic sentence.*

What do the E's do for my paragraph?

- back up your reasons, details and facts (RDFs)
- support your topic sentence
- make your writing interesting and believable

***The REDS will always support the RDF (the YELLOW).**

PRACTICE

Find the E's (REDS)

Gulls

Gulls, birds that live by the ocean, have several tricks for getting the food they need. One method is to fly near the surface of the water and watch for schools of small fish. The gulls are able to catch these fish with their sharp beaks. Gulls also eat clams. They find the clams along the beaches. Since the clamshells are hard to open, the gulls drop them on the rocks. When the clam hits the rock, it cracks open. Sometimes the gulls are lucky enough to get scraps of fish from fishing boats nearby. These scraps come from fishermen, who just leave them all around the boats. Gulls eat a lot of fish, so they are busy most of the time hunting for food.

Noise or Music

When I visited my grandparents in Tennessee last summer, I learned about katydids. I first heard the katydids at night when we sat on the front porch. These little bugs were making a noise that was very loud. Grandmother explained that the katydids in her bushes make the noise by rubbing their wings together. I also heard them when we took a walk in the fields near the barn. My grandfather said that the noise never stops. The katydids, he said, are like grasshoppers. They both make noise to attract a mate or to frighten enemies away. These little creatures are interesting, and they definitely know how to make a lot of noise.



Conclusions: The Final Important Statement **(The Greens – Part II)**

The final sentence (or sentences) in a paragraph is often called the **conclusion**. This sentence(s) can also be called the **clincher** or **closing statement**. Whatever it is called, this sentence(s) reinforces the topic sentence (so it is also *green*); it reminds the reader of the position—the purpose—of the paper.

Your conclusion could be:

- **formal (for business letters and essays)**
- **clear and direct (for business letters, essays and news articles)**
- **a clincher that is more friendly and may express emotion**

**All three of the above conclusions work, but you must decide which fits the assignment you are writing.*

Write a concluding sentence for the following paragraph:

My New Year's Resolutions

In 2014, I will do two things differently. I first promise to not pick on my little sister. Every year I say this, but I end up being mean to her by the end of January. It hurts her feelings, and I know she looks up to me. My second resolution is to exercise at least 10 minutes each day. We go to Englewood Rec Center sometimes to swim. My dad taught me how to lap swim and swan dive, and now I'm good enough at it to stay in shape.

Part II:

Accordion Essays

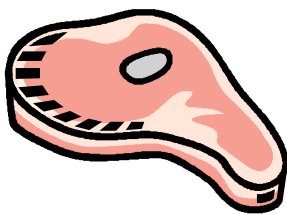
Elements of an Accordion Essay

An introductory paragraph with a thesis statement and projected plan



Organized information created by blocking out and creating informal outlines

Transitional topic sentences that introduce the key ideas supporting the thesis statement



Examples and evidence that elaborate on the key ideas introduced in the transitional topic sentences

Conclusions that refocus the reader's attention on the thesis statement



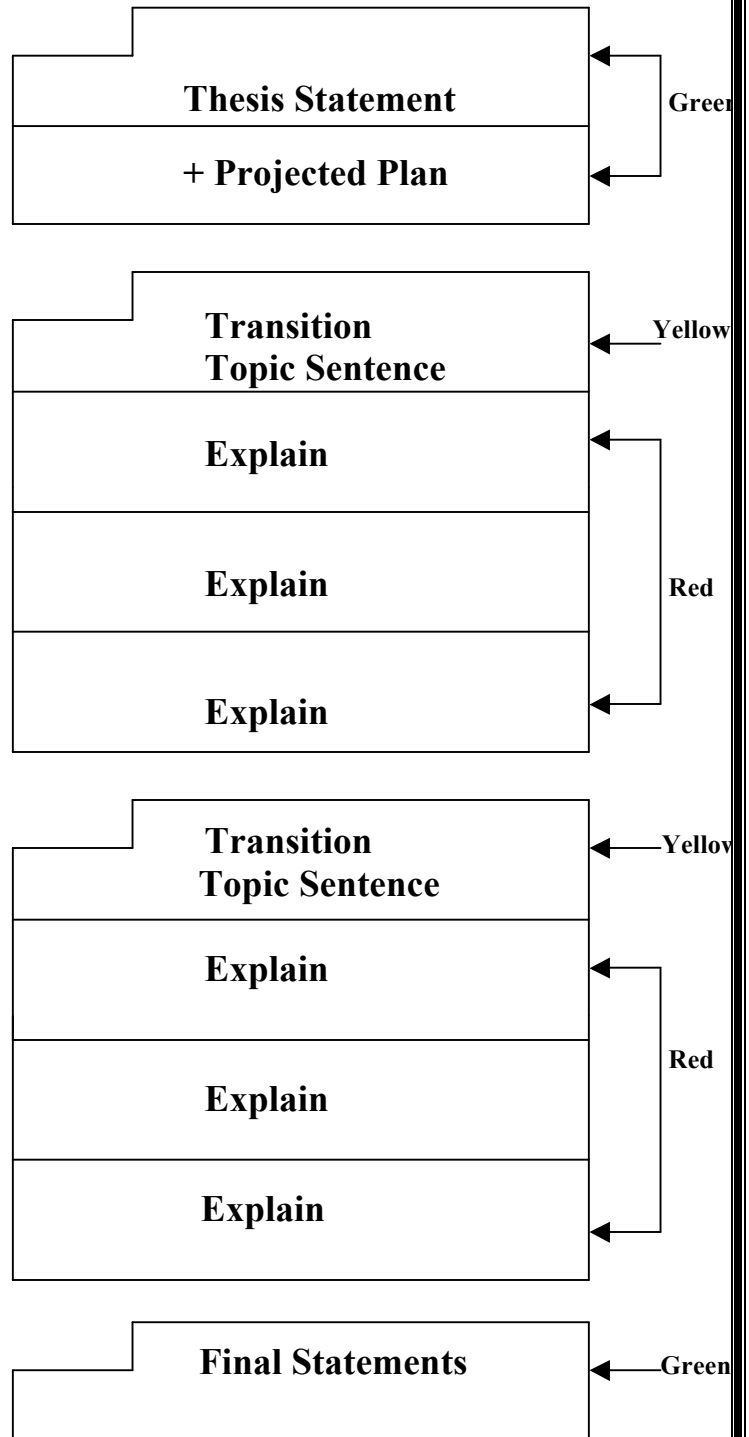
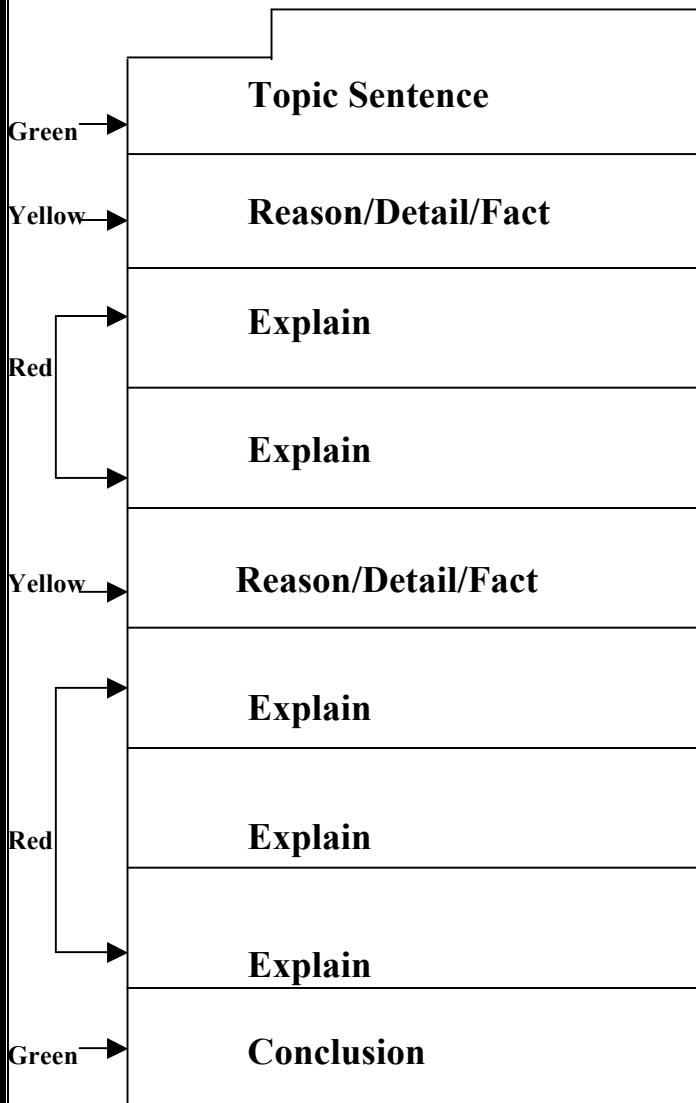
Stretch Accordion Paragraphs Into Essays

*Accordion essays vary in length just like Accordion paragraphs.



Accordion Paragraph

Accordion Essay



Eight Sentence Paragraph Example



The Tattered Cover Book Store

← title (green)

If you visit Denver, you will want to make at least one trip to our city's most famous bookstore, the Tattered Cover. **First, you'll be**

← topic sentence (green)

impressed by the friendly

← key idea plus transition (yellow)

atmosphere. The displays make books easy to find, and comfortable chairs, perfect for reading, are available everywhere. A café is available for those who want to sip coffee or enjoy a pastry. **Next,**

← explanation (red)

you'll appreciate the customer service. Those who choose to work at the Tattered Cover are readers themselves, and they are anxious to help customers find just the right book. In each section of the store, you'll find trained employees who know how and where to find the book you want. **Ask anyone in**

← key idea plus transition (yellow)

Denver; they'll certainly recommend the Tattered Cover.

← explanation (red)

← conclusion (green)

How could this paragraph be “stretched” into an essay?

Multi-paragraph Paper (Essay)



The Tattered Cover Book Store

Denver is a great choice for tourists who appreciate beauty and want to stay active. We have beautiful parks, great shopping, exciting sports events, and fantastic theater productions. **If they visit Denver, however, tourists will want to make at least one trip to our city's most famous bookstore, the Tattered Cover.** There are reasons why people in Denver love this store.

First, everyone is impressed by the friendly atmosphere. The displays make books easy to find, and comfortable chairs, perfect for reading, are available everywhere. It is not unusual to find college students and senior citizens browsing for books or sharing reactions to the latest best seller. A café is available for those who want to sip coffee or enjoy a pastry. A section called 'bargain books' is just as popular as the children's book area, which is always crowded with moms, dads, and kids.

Next, they appreciate the customer service. Those who choose to work at the Tattered Cover are readers themselves, and they are anxious to help customers find just the right book. In each section of the store, trained employees make every effort to help. When a book is not in stock, they have immediate access to computers and will place a special order. If a customer isn't quite sure about a title or author, the salesperson knows where to hunt for the information.

Ask anyone in Denver; they'll certainly recommend the Tattered Cover. A trip to our beautiful city would not be complete without a stop at this famous gathering place.

- ← title (green)
- ← hook/background information (blue)
- ← thesis statement (green)
- ← plan (green)
- ← transition topic sentence (yellow)
- ← explanation (red)
- ← transition topic sentence (yellow)
- ← explanation (red)
- ← conclusion (green)

The 12 Steps to Write an Accordion Essay



STEP 1:

Identify your topic with the **title** you choose. Give your paper a title right away, even if it is a temporary title that you will change later.



STEP 2:

Decide what you **want to do** with your topic—explain, prove, persuade, compare, contrast, define, inform, or describe.

Create a controlling statement called a thesis statement. This will let your reader know exactly what you plan to prove or explain in your paper.



STEP 3:

Make a **plan**. The plan will be part of the introductory paragraph. It tells your reader what to expect and provides structure for the paper. It addresses the key ideas that you plan to share.



STEP 4:

Once you have a plan, you can **block out** the paper. Blocking out is simple; it just means that you will draw a rectangle to illustrate each paragraph of your paper. Once you are done, it should look like a graphic organizer.



STEP 5:

Create an **informal outline** based on your plan. This gives you the opportunity to see if you have enough information to support your main ideas. **NOTE:** Some writers create their informal outlines before they do Steps 2, 3, or 4. As you experiment with this method, you'll see that both approaches work.



STEP 6:

As you make your informal outline, choose **transitions** that will be used to introduce your key concepts. You are always free to change your mind about the transition, but choosing a transition in advance will help you remember this important tool for writing essays.

STEP 7:

Plan a **conclusion**. Even if you just make a quick dash outline of points you might want to include in your conclusion, it will help. This step gets your mind thinking about the conclusion.

STEP 8:

Using your informal outline, write the **first draft**. Always skip lines as you write the first draft. This will give you space to revise (make changes) and edit (find errors). Eventually, you should be able to take your informal outline directly to a computer to type it up.

In addition, these first eight steps can be repeated in a timed testing situation. You can train yourself to repeat these steps in a very brief outline on a small scrap of paper.

STEP 9:

Revise your first draft. Look for ways to improve the content, structure of your sentences, vocabulary (word choice), or the general organization.

STEP 10:

Edit your paper. Look for spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization mistakes. Do not be afraid to ask someone for help if you have trouble with this!

STEP 11:

Create the **final copy**.

STEP 12:

Proofread! Look for those mistakes we all make in final copies—*the* instead of *that*, missed periods, etc.



Thesis Statements & Introductory Paragraphs

A **thesis statement** is just like the topic sentence you write in a paragraph. Like a topic sentence, the purpose of a thesis statement is to identify the **topic** (the occasion—the reason for writing) and the **position** (your opinion—what you plan to prove or explain). This statement controls the rest of the paper.

A thesis statement:

- Is the heart of your paper
- States the main idea of the essay
- Contains words and ideas that indicate the focus of the essay
- Presents a general idea that will be supported by reasons, details, or facts in the essay

Thesis Statement Examples:

1. Although Florence Nightingale could have had a life of luxury and ease, she chose to leave her wealthy British family and dedicate her life to helping others.
2. Well-trained dogs make good pets, impress friends and neighbors, and become lifetime companions.

Creating the Introductory Paragraph: **Occasion/Position/Projected Plan**

Once you have the thesis, the **introductory paragraph** is easy to write. To write an introductory paragraph you will need a **thesis statement** and a **plan**, which is basically your answer to the thesis statement.

Thesis statement:

Although Charles Lindbergh was sometimes called “Lucky Lindy,” no one would dare refer to his 1927 flight across the Atlantic as a feat of luck.

Plan:

His successful flight was clearly due to the extensive planning, talent as a pilot, and raw courage.

BLUES + THESIS STATEMENT + PLAN = INTRODUCTION



Practicing Occasion/Position/Projected Plan

Complete the *projected plan* in each paragraph.

1. When high school students are looking for their first jobs, they should consider three things. Students should _____, _____, and _____.
2. States spend a great deal of money on their prisons; instead the money should be spent on _____. Spending money on _____ would improve _____ and _____.
3. During the summer there are many activities for high school students. These teenagers can enjoy the time off from school by _____, _____, and _____.
4. If someone is looking for a new hobby or sport to try, I recommend _____. I recommend _____ because it is _____ and _____.



Adding “The Blues”

The Hook / Interesting Lead / Background Information

For many beginning writers, the introduction is often just the thesis statement and the projected plan. When you are ready to move on, need a longer introduction, or just want to inspire your readers, try adding the **BLUES** to your introduction.

Adding the BLUES—also called a hook or lead—is like *decorating the thesis*. This extra information gives readers the *background* they might need to understand the topic. It might be used to excite readers and encourage them to keep reading. Think of the BLUES as an opportunity to educate or entertain the reader.

When you need a longer introduction, add some BLUE! Notice below that the strategies that improve an introduction can also improve a conclusion.

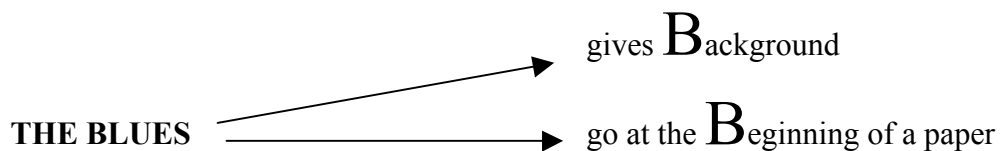
When you **introduce** your topic, you might:

- Tell a story
- Use humor
- Use a quotation
- Start with a question that you will answer in your paper
- Present important facts related to the topic
- Make a bold or startling statement
- Illustrate your topic with an example from the news, T.V., history, movies, or literature

When you **conclude** your paper, you might:

- Tell a story
- Use humor
- Use a quotation
- End with a question that will make your readers think
- Review important facts related to the topic
- Make a bold or startling statement
- Finish your paper with an example from the news, T.V., history, movies, or literature

Here is a **GREAT** way to remember what the Blues are and when they are used in an essay:





Examples of Adding BLUES

KEY:

Italics = BLUES

Underlined = GREENS

Example #1:

“A more modest bearing, a more unaffected presence, a manlier, kindlier, simpler character no idol of the multitude ever displayed. Never has America been prouder of a son” (318 Week). There have been many great aviators in history, but none is equal to Charles Lindbergh. He was more than a legendary aviator. Even though he will most likely be remembered for his historic flight in 1927, he contributed much more. His success is a combination of his planning and preparation, his historic flight, and his contributions to aviation.

- Nick Kuhn, 1994

Example #2:

A Very Special Program

Kelly Garrison

It was the first week of classes for the fall semester at CU. A group of twenty students were gathered in a lounge in Willard Hall. The leader of the group asked those assembled how many of them had told their friends or roommates what kind of meeting they were attending. Not one hand was raised. They all agreed that they had been secretive and had avoided telling others the nature of their meeting. The groups of students that day were learning disabled students. They were meeting to discuss some of the problems they might encounter during the year...Many students and professors alike are not aware that the University of Colorado has developed a program to help these special students succeed in their educational careers. Two main forms of support that CU’s Learning Disabled Program offers are first, educational strengthening and, second, psychological and emotional support.

Answer the following question:

1. After looking over the two examples, what are some similarities between them?

Using the INTRODUCTION to Block Out an Essay



What does it mean to **block out** an essay?

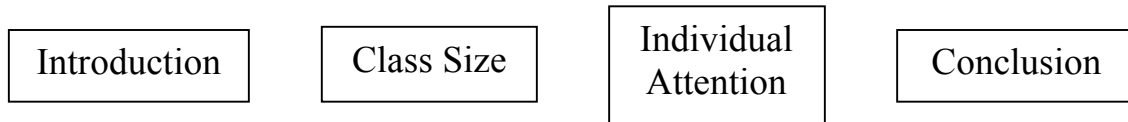
- You are drawing a picture of your essay to help you plan ahead.
- Each block you make indicates a paragraph. The first block is the introduction, middle blocks are the body paragraphs, and the last block is the conclusion.
- Blocking out an essay saves you time because you already have an idea about how long your paper will be and what will go into each paragraph.

Below are some examples of a blocked out essay:

Example #1:

Selecting a College

Selecting the right college could be very difficult for some high school graduates. Some look forward to attending large state universities, but others, like my cousin Heather, prefer small colleges. Heather has applied to several small colleges because *she believes that the small classes and the individual attention they provide will help her succeed.*



Example #2: Try this on your own!

Important Themes

Have you ever taken a class in mythology? If you study Greek mythology, be sure to include the stories of Icarus and Phaethon. These stories are interesting because they are about teenagers, about greed, and about death.



***MAKE LARGER BOXES IF YOU WANT TO ADD DETAILS**



Transitional Topic Sentences

The **transition topic sentences (yellows)** are the first sentences in the body paragraphs of your essay; they introduce the supporting details that prove or explain your thesis. The number of transition topic sentences depends on your projected plan. When you color-code your sentences, these would be the yellow sentences.

There are three ways to write a transition topic sentence:

- Use transitional expressions (see pages 19-20)
- Repeat a key word or phrase
- Use synonyms

EXAMPLE:

A writer might write about problems teenagers face on a daily basis. The transition topic sentences (with the transitions in italics) for the body paragraphs might be:

Introduction

One problem facing teens is learning to handle the responsibilities of school and work.

Transition
Topic Sentence

A *second* problem is learning to establish priorities.

Transition
Topic Sentence

Third, teens are always looking for ways to cope with parents and other adults in their lives.

Transition
Topic Sentence

Conclusion

Drugs and Alcohol: I'm Better than both of them!
by Holly Huffman
(8th grade)
(Colorado Law Enforcement Association Essay Winner)

(green) → Even though it seems as if many people today are using drugs, I know that I am above both alcohol and drugs and the harmful things they cause. For many reasons it is obvious to me that I can stand up for my beliefs, and alcohol and drugs will never be a part of my life.

Transition → *First, I know what drugs and alcohol can do to my*
Topic *body.* Because I am an athlete, the effects drugs and
Sentence alcohol have on my body are of great importance to me.
(yellow) I would never do anything to my body that would put me
(reds) at a disadvantage in an athletic competition. Drugs
would prevent me from being the best that I could be.
Furthermore, I never would jeopardize my good health
for a quick high. I want to live a long happy life, not one
filled with illness and pain.

Transition → *Second, I am above drugs and alcohol because it is*
Topic *against the law for me to use them.* There are serious
Sentence consequences for doing drugs and drinking, and I do not
(yellow) want to waste any of my life in jail. Just trying drugs
(reds) one time could ruin my life. I would have a police
record that would never disappear. I might not get
accepted to the college I wish to attend or get a good job
because of one bad decision. One quick high could
destroy all my dreams of success. Even if the police did
not catch me, I would always have to live with the fear of
getting caught. I know when something I do is wrong,
and I do not think I could live with that.

Transition → *Finally, drugs will never be a part of my life*
Topic *because I am an independent person.* I never want to
Sentence have to rely on any substance to maintain a happy state. I
(yellow) never want to have to face addiction or withdrawal that
(reds) comes with all drugs. I also do not want anyone to have
the power of drugs over me; I want to do everything I
can in life.

(green) —————>

Obviously, I never want drugs or alcohol to be a part of my life. I know that my health, family, and dreams are so important to me that I would never risk losing them. Drugs and alcohol could destroy everything that I have worked for. Because I want to live and prosper, I know I am above drugs and alcohol.

**Please remember that this is just an example, and that there are other ways of organizing an essay.*

The E's (Red's): Examples, Evidence, and Explanations



As you already know, transitions are important, but they are only a small part of that first sentence in each body paragraph (the YELLOWS) that leads to the most important part of your paper: the specific examples and explanation that prove and support your thesis statement (the REDS).

***The REDS will always support the transitional topic sentence (the YELLOW).**

Writing the Conclusion



A conclusion should:

- Remind the reader of the thesis of your paper
- Repeat the key words from your thesis or use synonyms
- NOT introduce a new topic
- Give the reader a reason to remember your topic

Strategies for Writing an Excellent Conclusion:

- **SUMMARIZE INFORMATION** – Obviously, buying U.S. savings bonds to save for college expenses is a good idea. They don't cost a lot of money, and they are secured by our own government. In fact, they are guaranteed to grow, and they are a tax advantage as well as an investment in your child's future.
- **ENCOURAGE ACTION** – Ask your employer or banker about saving for college with U.S. savings bonds. Write: U.S. Savings Bonds for Education, Department of the Treasury, Washington, DC 20226, or call 1-800-4US BOND. This certainly could be the first important step in planning for the future.

Outline for an Essay

_____ (Name)
_____ (Teacher's Name)
_____ (Class)
_____ (Date)

Title: _____

Introductory Paragraph:

BLUE: _____

Thesis: _____

Plan: _____

Block out your essay:

(T = _____) Y = _____

R = _____

R = _____

(T = _____) Y = _____

R = _____

R = _____

(T = _____) Y = _____

R = _____

R = _____

(T = _____) Y = _____

R = _____

R = _____

Conclusion: _____
