

Types Of Paragraphs

Write in English

Lesson Ten

types of paragraphs

The four different **types of paragraphs** are **descriptive, narrative, expository, and persuasive**. These four types allow you to write about absolutely anything that you want! By understanding these different types of paragraphs and what they are used for, the English [world is your oyster](#). Read on to learn more about these paragraphs and how you will use them.

Many ESL students get nervous when it comes to writing in English. However, if you spend the time to learn the basics and become comfortable with the smaller parts of writing in English, the bigger parts become easier.

For example, don't stress about writing an essay in English. You can start smaller by focusing on just the paragraphs that make up an essay.

The descriptive paragraph

The descriptive paragraph describes something and shows the reader what a thing or a person is like. The words chosen in the description often appeal to the five senses of touch, smell, sight, sound, and taste. Descriptive paragraphs can be artistic and may deviate from grammatical norms.

An example of a descriptive paragraph:

The lights grow brighter as the earth lurches away from the sun, and now the orchestra is playing yellow cocktail music, and the opera of voices pitches a key higher. Laughter is easier minute by minute, spilled with prodigality, tipped out at a cheerful word. The groups change more swiftly, swell with new arrivals, dissolve and form in the same breath; already there are wanderers, confident girls who weave here and there among the stouter and more stable, become from a sharp, joyous moment the center of a group, and then, excited with triumph, glide on through the sea-change of faces and voices and color under the constantly changing light.

This excerpt is taken from *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. In this paragraph you can hear, see, and feel the setting in which the story takes place. When you practice writing a descriptive paragraph yourself, you should address all aspects of the physical world.

The narrative paragraph

The narrative paragraph tells a story. There's a sequence of action or there's a clear beginning, middle, and end to the paragraph.

An example of a narrative paragraph:

It's been almost ten years since I first ran for political office. I was thirty-five at the time, four years out of law school, recently married, and generally impatient with life. A seat in the

Illinois legislature had opened up, and several friends suggested that I run, thinking that my work as a civil rights lawyer, and contacts from my days as a community organizer, would make me a viable candidate. After discussing it with my wife, I entered the race and proceeded to do what every first-time candidate does: I talked to anyone who would listen. I went to block club meetings and church socials, beauty shops and barbershops. If two guys were standing on a corner, I would cross the street to hand them campaign literature. And everywhere I went, I'd get some version of the same two questions.

This opening paragraph from Barack Obama's *The Audacity of Hope* tell an interesting story about how a man entered the arena of politics. It has a beginning, a middle, and an end, and it raises the reader's curiosity about what will happen next.

The expository paragraph

The expository paragraph explains something or provides instruction. It could also describe a process and move the reader step by step through a method. This type of paragraph often requires research, but it's possible that the writer is able to rely on his or her own knowledge and expertise.

An example of an expository paragraph:

All toilet flush tanks work about the same. When the toilet is flushed, the trip handle lifts the tank ball, opening the outlet and letting water flow into the bowl. When the tank is nearly empty, the ball falls back in place over the outlet. The float falls with the water level, opening the water-supply inlet valve just as the outlet is being closed, and the tank is refilled through the filler tube. Water also flows through the bowl refill tube into the overflow pipe to replenish trap-sealing water. As the water level in the tank nears the top of the overflow pipe, the float closes the inlet valve, completing the cycle.

This paragraph from Reader's Digest *Complete Do-it-yourself Manual* gives detailed information about how the water moves through a toilet when it is flushed. It's instructive, and if you like this kind of thing, it may even be interesting.

The persuasive paragraph

This type of paragraph tries to get the reader to accept a particular point of view or understand the writer's position. This is the type of paragraph that many teachers focus on because it's useful when building an argument. It often requires the collection of facts and research.

An example of a persuasive paragraph:

Immigration contributes to the overall health of the American economy. Despite recent concerns related to the costs created by illegal and some legal immigration to the United States, this country has largely benefited from the skills, talents, and ambition that immigrants bring with them. American businesses gain from a good source of affordable labor, while town and cities are revitalized by immigrant families who strengthen communities through civic participation the generation of new economic activity. The United States must continue to welcome new arrivals and help those who already here; otherwise, the country will lose the advantages it has over other industrialized countries who compete against us in the global

marketplace and seek to recruit from a vast pool of unskilled and skilled global workers.
This is the paragraph that appeared on the page describing what a paragraph is. Your teacher wrote it. I have an opinion about a particular topic, and in this paragraph I want the reader to accept or consider my position. The persuasive paragraph is, perhaps, the most difficult to write but there is a good method I can show you in order to be successful in writing one.

In the next four lessons, we will take a closer look at each of these types of paragraphs, starting with what I consider to be the easiest: [the descriptive paragraph](#).

Next: [Lesson Eleven](#)

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