

# Paragraph Lesson 1: Basic Paragraph

Organize Notebook  
Paragraph Checklist & No List

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## 1. Organize Notebooks WS 1 (TP 1)

Notebooks need to be organized no later than Lesson 2. Extra notebook paper goes in the very front of the notebook. Fill in the blanks on WS 1. (File WS 1 behind the “Lesson Notes” tab.)

Organize Notebook – 8 tabs

1. Assignments (Papers and notes for current independent work instruction & completed independent work due)
2. Checklists (Current Checklist and No List for editing independent work)
3. Word Lists (As introduced, keep here for easy reference)
4. Lesson Notes (Other papers and notes)
5. Reading List (For required outside reading)
6. Graded Work (Graded paragraphs & poetry)
7. Worksheets (Copies to be used and for independent work)
8. Mind Benders® (Ready for independent work)

## 2. Introduce Mind Benders® WS 2 (TP 2)

This course teaches an organized, systematic approach to writing. Mind Benders® are a fun, effective way of teaching an organized, systematic approach to problem solving. Examples showing how to work Mind Benders® are included in each Mind Bender® book with answers and instructions for every Mind Bender® in the back. Mind Bender® books may be purchased from. [www.criticalthinking.com](http://www.criticalthinking.com).

**Which book?** The problems gradually but progressively become harder in the Mind Bender® books. Which Mind Bender® to work for each lesson is not specified in Paragraph Writing lessons or assignments.

- ✓ As a general rule, Book 4 is recommended for this level.
- ✓ If a student has not worked Mind Bender® Book 3, then complete Book 3 before starting Book 4.
- ✓ If a student has worked on, but not completed Book 3, complete Book 3 and then work Book 4.
- ✓ If starting with Book 3 at this level, consider working 2 problems per lesson instead of 1 per lesson.
- ✓ Otherwise, work 1 problem per lesson.

Use the example included with this lesson, or use the example from the front of the Mind Bender® book.

Work a practice problem together. Mark the answers on **TP 2** as students mark **WS 2**.

Answers: mother – Sandy, father – Brent, sister – Chris, brother – Pat.

(File WS 2 behind the “Lesson Notes” tab.)

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### 3. Checklists WS 3, 4, 5 (TP 3, 4, 5)

#### Paragraph Writing Checklist 1 – 7 and the No List 1 - 13

Discuss the Paragraph Writing Checklist (1 – 7) **TP 3 & WS 3** and the No List (1 – 13) **TP 4 & WS 4**.

- All paragraphs should be formatted, highlighted and marked according to the Paragraph Writing Checklist and The No List.
- The Paragraph Writing Checklist and The No List will be used to grade papers every week.
- The lists will be added to as the year progresses.
- Both lists should be stored under the Checklists tab for future reference.

Illustrate the Paragraph Checklists using **TP 5 “Otter”**. Students do **not** need to mark **WS 5** of “Otter”.

Discuss each item on the No List as well, illustrating when necessary.

#### Lessons 1 – 5

#### Paragraph Writing Checklist

At least 6 sentences per paragraph & 100 – 230 words per paragraph

*(Write the number of words for each paragraph beside each paragraph.)*

1. Indent & Paragraph Form (*First line goes in 5 – 10 spaces & paragraph should look like a box.*)
2. Type & Double space (*Size 12 font preferred, no larger than 14, must be easy to read, space must be left between lines to write notes when needed and is standard spacing for formal writing.*)
3. Begin each sentence with a capital letter. (*Only beginning words and proper nouns capitalized.*)
4. Put punctuation at the end of each sentence. (*Periods only*)
5. Subject and verb in every sentence. (*Every sentence must be a complete thought.*)
6. Begin sentences with different words. (*Every first word in a paragraph must be different – raises level of writing.*) (*Side Note: When starting sentences with conjunctions a comma must follow the conjunction or the sentence is not a complete thought. Do not allow students to begin sentences with “And,” because even with a comma after it, it still is not appropriate for formal writing. Limit students to 1 sentence per paragraph using a conjunction followed by a comma to start a sentence.*)
7. Title – must be taken from the last sentence. (*Explained in section 4 of this lesson.*)

Introduction – Highlight topic & point of view (pink)

Highlight 4 supports (4 different colors – blue, yellow, green, orange)

Conclusion – Highlight topic & point of view (pink)

**The No List:** Use the No List as a tool, but use your own judgment to enforce the list.

**1. Incomplete sentences** are occasionally used in literary writing, but are not acceptable 99% of the time in formal writing. Students should focus on correct formal writing 100% of the time not how to bend the rules.

**2. Run-on sentences** are never appropriate in writing. Run-ons consist of 2 complete sentences made into 1 sentence that is often joined by just a comma.

**Questions, exclamation marks** and **parenthesis** are used in all forms of writing. But, students need to learn how to write complete, concise, descriptive, factual but sometimes silly statements without these.

**3. Questions** lead to students not stating facts, and instead they mostly ask questions. Questions will be allowed when and after hooks are introduced.

**4. Exclamation marks** are used to show expression, but students need to learn how to show expression with just their words instead of lazily slapping an exclamation mark at the end of a boring sentence and figuring that now the sentence shows expression.

**5. Parenthesis** are often overused and used incorrectly. Students use them where commas should be used.

**6. When quotes** are allowed at this level, the quotes tend to dominate the writing. Focus on how to write without someone else's words. How to use and document quotes correctly is taught later in Essay Writing,

**7. When allowed to use dialogue** in writing, the dialogue tends to dominate. The action and description are either limited or non-existent. If a story is written with only action and description, dialogue can be added later. Learn to write with action and description, not dialogue.

**8. Some students use ...** as a crutch instead of using commas or where they lose thought and do not know what words to put.

**9. It is best to ban the semi-colon (;)** while concentrating on the basic fundamentals of writing a well organized descriptive paragraph. If the teacher chooses, students can use **1 semi-colon** per paragraph, but limit the use to 1 semi-colon per paragraph. Make a special note on the No List if allowing 1 semi-colon per paragraph. Semi-colons are taught later in Paragraph Writing. **Semi colon:** Use a semi-colon to connect 2 closely related complete sentences.

**10. Ban the colon (:)** usage completely while concentrating on the basic fundamentals of writing a well organized descriptive paragraph. Correct usage of the colon is often confused with the semi-colon. Also, since students have so many other things they are learning at this point in the course, they need to concentrate on the basic fundamentals for now. Colons are taught later in Essay Writing.

Most of the items on the No List are used commonly in writing. The following, 11, 12 and 13 are restricted in this curriculum because they are not allowed in formal writing:

- 11.** No contractions (*not acceptable in formal writing – don't, it's*)
- 12.** No slang (*not acceptable in formal writing – hot, cool, bad... used incorrectly*)
- 13.** No announcements (*Do not state – I am going to tell you about... Here are the reasons why... Do not tell the audience you are going to tell them something; just state it as a fact.*)

### Lessons 1 – 8

#### Paragraph No List

1. No incomplete sentences (*must have subject and verb and be a complete thought*)
2. No run-ons (*each sentence must contain 1 complete thought*)
3. No questions (*students are telling information, not asking*)
4. No exclamation marks (*learn to make words express emotion, instead of mark*)
5. No parentheses (*will not be needed; use commas instead*)
6. No quotations marks / quotes (*takes the place of other information, so leave out "quotes"*)
7. No dialogue – conversation (*takes the place of other information, so leave out "conversation"*)
8. No ... ( *... often used improperly, so cannot use at this level* )
9. No semi-colons ( ; *used improperly too often at this level* )
10. No colons ( : *used improperly too often at this level* )
11. No contractions (*not acceptable in formal writing – don't, it's*)
12. No slang (*not acceptable in formal writing – hot, cool, bad... used incorrectly*)
13. No announcements (*Do not state – In conclusion... That is the reason... Here is a list... These are the topics... Like it says ... All of that to say... Finally... This means...*)

#### 4. Creating Titles WS 5, 6 (TP 5 again, 6)

Using **TP 5**, discuss how “Otter” is an okay title, but not the best. *The title needs to reflect what the paragraph is about and catch the reader’s attention.*

Look at the last sentence and choose 2 – 3 words to create a new title, such as – **Created for Water, Living and Playing, or An Otter Environment.** Come up with a couple of interesting titles besides “Otter.” (WS 5 will be used again later.)

**Titles Practice TP 6 & WS 6:** Pull at least 3 possible titles from the following sentences together. Highlight words used from each sentence. Examples are written following each sentence, with the words used from the sentence underlined in the original sentence. In titles always capitalize the first and last words. Then, consider the rest of the words and capitalize any of the words left that are important. (File WS 6 behind the “Lesson Notes” tab.)

1. “By using the Biographical test, people can show that the same **test** used to **account** for **historical accuracy** in hundreds of other documents can be used on the Bible, and to **discredit one** means one must **discredit the other.**”

Possible titles: **Historical Accuracy / Test Accountability / Discredit One, Discredit the Other.**

2. “**Incredible** and as well known as this **phenomenon** is, **scientists** still have **no explanation** for how these **great balls of fire** can exist.”

Possible titles: **Incredible Phenomenon / Scientists Without Reasons / Great Balls of Fire**

3. “If the **irritating ringing** does not stop, at least realizing the source of the **problem** will hopefully ease the **pain** and discomfort.”

Possible titles: **Irritating Ringing / Painful Ringing / Problem Ringing**

#### 5. Basic Paragraph WS 7 (TP 8)

Fill in the blanks on *Basic Paragraph* information which is the basic paragraph form that will be used for the entire course. (File WS 7 behind the “Lesson Notes” tab.)

##### Basic Paragraph

1. **Topic** sentence – states the **topic** and **point** of **view** of the paragraph.
2. **Support** sentences – give additional **information** about the **topic** of the paragraph.
3. **Concluding** sentence – restates the **topic** and **final** point of view of the paragraph.

## 6. Highlight Instructions WS 8 (TP 8)

Highlight colors as shown for each section on **WS 8 & TP 8** to show how to highlight paragraphs and outlines. (File these instructions under the “Checklists” tab.)

### Highlighting Outlines & Paragraphs

Highlight – Topic & point of view

1. Highlight topic information pink on your outline.
2. Highlight topic sentence pink on your paragraph.

Highlight – 3 or 4 main points

1. Highlight support A blue on your outline.  
Highlight support A blue on your paragraph.  
They should contain the same information.
2. Highlight support B yellow on your outline.  
Highlight support B yellow on your paragraph.  
They should contain the same information.
3. Highlight support C green on your outline.  
Highlight support C green on your paragraph.  
They should contain the same information.
4. Highlight support D orange on your outline.  
Highlight support D orange on your paragraph.  
They should contain the same information.

Highlight – Conclusion must include topic, point of view

1. Highlight concluding sentence pink on your outline.
2. Highlight concluding information pink on your paragraph.

## 7. Highlight “Otters” WS 5 (TP 5 again)

The main objective in this activity is to introduce how to write a standard outline. “Otters” paragraph **TP 5 & WS 5** is used to show how to outline and then rewrite the paragraph. The activity used to teach is called writing backwards. The challenge is some then think the paragraph should be written first and then the

outline. The order for every paragraph is brainstorming, which is taught in the next lesson, then outline and then write the paragraph. Writing backwards is only used in this lesson to introduce outlining.

The “Otter” paragraph is not intended to be a model of excellent writing and has room for improvement. Some will be able to rewrite this paragraph ending with a better written paragraph, but that is not the objective of this lesson. Outlining is the main objective and the paragraph easily fits into the standard basic outline form.

Read the paragraph out loud if it has not been read out loud yet, and then highlight according to the following directions. Some supports have 2 sentences.

Highlight original “Otters”:

- ◆ Introductory (Topic) sentence pink (1<sup>st</sup> sentence)
- ◆ Supporting sentences 4 different colors (blue, yellow, green, orange)
- ◆ Concluding sentence (mention topic again) pink (last sentence)

### Otters

**(pink)** Numerous animals require a water environment for survival, but otters are one of the few mammals with this need. **(blue)** Otters are equipped to thrive in a water environment, with a long slim body and short limbs with webbed paws and sharp claws. They have a soft under fur, which is protected by outer long hair that traps air, keeping them warm and dry. **(yellow)** Many now inhabit cold waters of North America, Europe, Asia and South America. In the past, however, they have been an endangered species, since they were extensively hunted and trapped for their thick, soft fur. **(green)** Typically their diet consists of primarily fish as well as frogs, crayfish and crabs, but also shellfish, small mammals and birds. **(orange)** All otters are capable of closing their ears and nose enabling them to dive and swim underwater as they are traveling or hunting. **(pink)** Often otters are observed playfully romping among themselves, apparently engaging in lively behavior for sheer enjoyment, while making it obvious they were created to live and play in their water environment. **(172 words)**

## 8. Introducing Block Outline WS 9 (TP 9)

Introduce the Block Outline **TP 9 & WS 9** to teach how to take brief notes and structure a paragraph correctly. Highlight the Block Outline, showing the correlation between the highlighted paragraph and the outline.

Select 4 – 6 important words per sentence from the original sentences. Only **four – six words** are allowed per sentence, plus symbols and numbers. Write the words on the 1<sup>st</sup> Block Outline **WS 9 & TP 9**. The example below shows one way to do this.

### Block Outline

**1<sup>st</sup> Sentence – Topic Box (I):** State your topic. Use for the 1<sup>st</sup> sentence in the paragraph.

I.	Otters, mammals, require water environment, survival	(pink)
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	
	A. equipped, long body, short limbs, soft fur, outer hair traps air	(blue)
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	
	B. live cold waters N. & S. America, Asia, Europe, endangered, hunted, fur	(yellow)
	4 <sup>th</sup>	
	C. diet, fish, frogs, crayfish, crabs, shellfish, small mammals, birds	(green)
	5 <sup>th</sup>	
	D. closes ears/nose dive, swim, hunt, travel under water	(orange)
	<b>6<sup>th</sup> Sentence – Concluding Sentence:</b> Restate your topic and bring paragraph an end.	
II.	Otter playful romping enjoyment created, live, play, water environment	(pink)

## 9. Rewriting Paragraph (TP 10)

- When the outline is complete, turn the original paragraph over and then construct 1 complete sentence with each set of words from the Block Outline. (May have 1 or 2 sentences per support.)
- Complete this exercise 1 sentence at a time, writing the sentences in paragraph form on notebook paper.
- After the last sentence is written, select some key words from the new last sentence to create a new title for the rewritten paragraph.

**The purpose is not to duplicate the original, nor to be creative; just use the original paragraph to provide information to write a paragraph in the *correct form*.**

**Example rewrite TP 10:** Following is an example rewritten paragraph. Highlight **TP 10** according to instructions to show the correlation between the original paragraph, outline and rewritten paragraph. Also show how the rewritten paragraph **TP 10** follows the 2 checklists introduced at the start of this lesson, **TP 3, 4 & WS 3, 4**.

### **Playing in Water**

(**Pink**) Otters are mammals which need the water environment for survival. (**Blue**) They are equipped with a long body and short limbs. To function in water, they have a soft fur that is covered by an outer layer of long hair, which traps air to keep them warm and dry. (**Yellow**) Living near mostly cold waters of North and South America, Asia, and Europe, they have been considered endangered since they were extensively hunted for their lush fur. (**Green**) Quite often, they seem to enjoy their diet of fish, frogs, crayfish, and crabs, as well as sometimes small mammals and birds. (**Orange**) Their ears and nose close when diving and swimming to hunt or travel under water. (**Pink**) Known for being rather playful, otters are delightful to observe living and playing in their water environments. (135 words)

## **10. Highlight Paragraphs WS 10 (TP 11, 12)**

Highlight paragraphs on **TP 11 & WS 10**, according to the colors as is instructed on **TP 8 & WS 8**.

Use “Be Wary of the Cassowary” and “A Thorny Little Devil,” **WS 10**, for independent work, repeating the same process with each paragraph, as already illustrated with “Otter” of outlining and rewriting the paragraphs.

## Paragraph 1:

## Be Wary of the Cassowary

**(Pink)** People would be wise not to threaten the Cassowary bird, because if they do, they might die. **(Blue)** Native to New Guinea, nearby islands and northeastern Australia, the Cassowary is known as the third largest bird in the world. **(Yellow)** In spite of their shyness, Cassowaries are extremely territorial and will attack if they feel threatened or if someone comes between them and their chicks. **(Green)** Nearing five feet tall, the bird sports an intimidating claw on its middle toe which has slashed and even killed dogs and children. **(Orange)** Typically, a Cassowary attacks larger targets by running and giving a flying ninja kick to its victim. **(Pink)** Although many people think they have been attacked by a Cassowary, the bird actually enjoys just running after people.

## Paragraph 2:

## A Thorny Little Devil

**(Pink)** A devil lives in Australia. Deep in the desert lives a small eight inch lizard called the Thorny Devil or also, Moloch. **(Blue)** Cone-like spikes completely cover this lizard, giving it a sharp appearance. **(Yellow)** At night dew settles on its skin and then flows through grooves in its skin where the water collects in its mouth. When it rains the lizard is able to literally suck water through its camouflaged skin. **(Green)** Ants make up this devil's diet and they can eat over a thousand in a day. **(Orange)** Even with a threatening appearance, the Thorny Devil is easy going and can be held by people. **(Pink)** Given the devil's diet, ants, and its easy going nature, it just might be the next popular pet in Texas.

## 11. Highlight Block Outlines WS 11 (TP 13)

Highlight **both** of the block outlines **TP 13 & WS 11**, according to the colors mentioned in the following example **TP 8 & WS 8**.

Use **WS 11** for independent work.

### Block Outline

**1<sup>st</sup> Sentence – Topic Box:** State your topic. Use for the 1<sup>st</sup> sentence in the paragraph.

<b>I.</b>	<b>(Pink)</b>
	2 <sup>nd</sup> sentence
	A. <b>(Blue)</b>
	3 <sup>rd</sup> sentence
	B. <b>(Yellow)</b>
	4 <sup>th</sup> sentence
	C. <b>(Green)</b>
	5 <sup>th</sup> sentence
	D. <b>(Orange)</b>
	<b>6<sup>th</sup> Sentence – Concluding Sentence:</b> Restate your topic and bring an end to your paragraph.
<b>II.</b>	<b>(Pink)</b>

File WS 9, 10, and 11 behind the “Assignment” tab or in the front pocket of their notebook for future reference when completing this assignment.

## Paragraph Assignment 1

### Independent work due:

- Organized Notebook
- Mind Bender®
- 2 Block Outlines – filled in
- 2 Rewritten Paragraphs

### Segment 1: Finish Organizing Notebook –

Put extra notebook paper in front of the Assignment tab.

#### Organize Notebooks 8 tabs

1. Assignments
2. Checklists
3. Word Lists
4. Lesson Notes
5. Reading List
6. Graded Work
7. Worksheets
8. Mind Benders®

### Segment 2: Mind Bender®

**Segment 3:** Take highlighted Paragraph 1, “Be Wary of the Cassowary”, and fill in the corresponding highlighted Block Outline. Then using only the block outline to assist you, rewrite the entire paragraph in your own words. Write, edit, and then type your final paragraph.

**Segment 4:** Take highlighted Paragraph 2, “A Thorny Little Devil”, and fill in the corresponding highlighted Block Outline. Then using only the block outline to assist you, rewrite the entire paragraph in your own words. Write, edit, and then type your final paragraph.

Use the **Paragraph Checklist** and **No List** to edit and correct **both** of your paragraphs. Highlight your finished paragraphs, according to **Highlighting Paragraphs and Outlines**.