

Learning to Read Text Structures Through Writing

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Story /Narrative
or
Fiction

Informational
or
Non-Fiction

My Writing Territories

Name _____

memories: early to recent	itches / problems / pet peeves
obsessions / passions	books / poems/ movies / writers and artists
teachers, now and then	sorrows
favorites: now and then / fads	risks
places: school, camp, trips, (times away with friends and relatives)	accomplishments/ successes
dreams/ fantasies	fears / worries/ confusions
hobbies	family, close and distant
sports and/or games	beloved things-objects and possessions- now and then
pets, now and then	friends, now and then

Adapted from: Nancy Atwell. *Lessons that Change Writers*. Heinemann

Gathering Ideas for Nonfiction Writing

1. List things that you think other people would like to know more about.
2. List things you have noticed recently that you want to know more about.
3. List things that you do well that you could show or teach other people.
4. List topics/ideas that you have read about lately that you would like to know more about.
5. List things that people have been talking about lately that you would like to know more about.
6. Talk with people you know about events, people, and issues that are in the news today. What questions come up? How could you find information to answer the questions?
7. List things that you use every day or most days (e.g., CD player, bicycle, tap water) that you would like to know more about. What questions do you have about how each thing works, or about how they came to be?
8. List things that are happening in your life, or in people's lives anywhere in the world, that you would like to see changed.
9. As you are reading any book of your choice, write the questions you have on sticky notes. Place the sticky notes in your idea bank.

Practice Finding Parts of a Paragraph

A paragraph is made up of three parts: 1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Directions: Use your pencil crayons to:

1. Underline the topic sentence in red and label it (T).
2. Circle the detail sentences in blue and label them (D).
3. Underline the clincher sentence in green and label it (C).

The Kiwi

The kiwi is very unique. It is a chicken-sized bird found in New Zealand. Unlike most birds, the Kiwi does not fly, nor does it have wings. It doesn't have feathers either. Instead, it is covered with long strands of hair. It also has a bump under its hair on either side of its body. Some people believe that these bumps might have been wings long ago. The Kiwi really is a very strange bird!

Chimp Talk

Chimpanzees use many different sounds to communicate with one another. When chimpanzees feel safe and happy, they grunt quietly to each other. These grunting noises are usually made during feeding or grooming time. Loud barking or hooting noises are made by chimpanzees when they get excited. Finding a good place to feed would excite them. Another sound they make is a loud scream. They do this when they are afraid or meet other chimpanzees in large groups. They really do seem to talk!

The Importance of Minerals

Minerals have been very important to people throughout the ages. Early man discovered that minerals were important in making his first tools. Chisels, knife blades, and spearheads were made of minerals. In addition, scientists have proven that minerals found in foods are important to our health. Our diet must have many minerals to keep us alive and well. With each new discovery, man places a higher value on minerals.

Check Your Understanding

Write a topic and clincher sentence for the paragraph below.

Lightning Quite a Show!

_____. Forked lightning, also known as zigzag or chain lightning, appears to resemble a river of light in the sky. Another kind of lightning, known as sheet lightning, creates a very bright sky. It's as if someone quickly flicked a giant light bulb on and off. It is caused by light from distant forked lightning. Finally, lightning that looks like a ball is actually called ball lightning.

Student Samples of Sequential Paragraphs

Baking a Cake

If you want to make a cake, you have to follow some steps. First, if you are too young you have to get some adult supervision. Next, you gather the ingredients that you need to bake it, such as eggs, flour, milk, water, and other things. Then, you mix all of the ingredients together and put it in a baking pan. Now you put it in the oven and wait for it to cook. Finally, it's done. Let it cool, and put on the frosting. Enjoy!

How to Write a Good Paragraph

Here are the five steps to make a great paragraph. First, you need to brainstorm on your topic. This is where you get your ideas for the paragraph. Second, you make your rough draft, where you put all you brainstorm ideas together. Third, you get together with a friend and do a 'writer's toolbox' where you read to a partner who helps you revise all the mistakes that you might not have seen. Fourth, you edit by fixing any errors in spelling, capitalization and punctuation. Finally, you make a final draft, where every part of the paragraph is cleaned up! Making a paragraph is hard, but if you follow these easy steps, everything should work out great!

Moving

The steps to move from one country to another aren't easy. First you have to sell your old house, and you may have to do a lot of paperwork. Make sure you have a place to stay in the country you're moving to! Second, you can start packing. Valuable, needed, and important things are usually packed. The rest is either given away or sold. Third, you travel, which can be by car or plane. Fourth, once you arrive, you'll have to unpack your things in your new home, and get used to your new surroundings. Finally, you'll have to make sure your address, phone number, etc. are correct. That may include more paperwork. Moving isn't easy!

Doggy Bath

To wash your dog in the winter isn't easy. First, you have to fill the tub with warm water. Second, you must get the dog in tub, which can be a challenge. After you get the dog in the tub, you must make him stay so you can shampoo his fur. Next, you rinse off the soap without him jumping out of the tub. Then, you drain the tub and shower off any left over suds. Now, he can shake all the water off and you can wrap him up in a towel. If you follow all these steps, you will have a clean fluffy dog to play with!

Student-led Writer's Toolbox – Revision Checklist

Name _____

Partner(s) _____

Topic _____

Type of Paragraph - _____

Topic Sentence:

____ Your topic sentence names the subject.

____ Your topic sentence gives a clue about the purpose of the paragraph.

____ Your topic sentence is a sentence (not just a title).

*If not - changes to make _____

Supporting Sentences:

____ You have enough detail/ information.

* If not – changes to make _____

____ Your detail sentences are accurate/ make sense.

* If not – changes to make _____

____ Your detail sentences are ordered correctly.

*If not – changes to make _____

Clincher Sentence:

____ You have a clincher.

* If not – changes to make _____

____ Your clincher either restates the topic, or makes a comment on the topic.

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Sequential Paragraph Rubric

Category	3	2	1	Student comments on how to improve:
Paragraph	Included topic sentence, detail sentences and clincher sentence *which all make sense	Topic, clincher, or some detail sentence(s) are confusing.	Missing topic, clincher, or detail sentence(s) do not make sense.	_____ _____ _____ _____
Signal Words	Uses signal words including: first, second, third, then, next, after, before, following, in addition to	Some repetition of signal words or incorrect use of signal word(s).	Missing signal word(s).	_____ _____ _____ _____
Revision Done	Made most of the changes needed to improve content or organization of paragraph.	Made a few changes to content or organization to improve meaning.	Missing needed changes to content or organization of paragraph.	_____ _____ _____ _____
Edit	Few errors in punctuation, spelling, or capitalization.	Some errors in punctuation, spelling, or capitalization.	Many errors in punctuation, spelling, or capitalization.	_____ _____ _____ _____

Adapted from: Piccolo, Jo Anne. *Structures for Reading, Writing,, Thinking*. ECS Learning Systems

Student Samples of Enumerative Paragraphs

My Favorite Rides at the Exhibition

I love going on three rides at the Red River Exhibition. My first ride is called the Niagara Falls. It consists of fake plastic logs taking you up a hill and then the log runs downhill on water making a big splash. It repeats this on a bigger hill for a huge splash! My second favorite is the Fireball. Basically, it is a group of seats in a circle attached by a big pole which spins while the pole swings back and forth. My third favorite is the dart throw. Okay, technically it isn't a ride, but I still find it fun because you can win prizes. Those are my favorite rides. If you ever go to the Ex., I hope you try them.

Four Different Kinds of Volleyball Hits

There are four hits that you can do in volleyball. First, there's the serve that the players do when they have control of the ball. Another kind of hit is the bump that you do with both arms out. In addition, there's the spike where the setter will set you the ball. Then you hit it overhand as hard as you can! Finally, there's the volley that should be used the most! You put your hands up, palms facing the ceiling, thumbs back facing your eyes and when the ball comes down you gently spring up your hands to the ball. All of these different hits are very important in volleyball!

Favorite Singers

I listen to music 24/7 and I have three favorite singers. My first favorite is Usher. I like him because he has a good voice and makes good songs. My next favorite is Alicia Keys. She is a true musician, because she can sing and play a musical instrument at the same time. My last favorite singer of my top three is Jojo. She's young, but has a good voice. For now at least, these are the singers I like the most.

Three of My Fears

Since I was little, I have always been scared of the same three things. First of all, I am scared of ghosts. I have always watched scary movies and the X-Files with my family. Then I get nightmares. Another thing that I am afraid of is giant rubber bugs with lots of legs. They aren't real, but they just look creepy. Finally, the last thing that I'm terrified of is...FAKE HAIR! Not long straight blonde wigs, but big curly, black fake hair. I still remember when I was really small, my mom bought one to wear at a party. When she got home, I held it in my hand for a moment. Then I chucked it at the wall and ran away. I have been scared of fake hair ever since. You may laugh, but they are real fears to me!

The End of Our World

There are many ways our world can come to an end. First there's global warming, which is likely to occur in the next fifty years. Next is the release of "Cold Fusion", which could be used in bombs to create an explosion with a shockwave reaching out to Mars. Then there is the chance of an asteroid hitting our planet with the force of 10,000 nuclear bombs. The last one is aliens invading our planet. These are only a taste of what is ahead!

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Enumerative Paragraph Rubric

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Signal Words	Uses signal words including: first, second, third (all ordinal numbers), one of, another, for example, also, in addition to, additionally, next, last, finally	Some repetition of signal words or incorrect use of signal word(s).	Missing signal word(s).	_____ _____ _____ _____
Revision Done	Made most of the changes needed to improve content or organization of paragraph.	Made a few changes to content or organization to improve meaning.	Missing needed changes to content or organization of paragraph.	_____ _____ _____ _____
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Student Samples of Cause Effect Paragraphs

The Blizzard

Once the wind and snow started, people went inside for warmth. The next day, the blizzard got worse, which had many effects. People were stuck in their homes, causing many adults to miss work. At least three feet of snow covered the ground, and the rapidly falling snow just kept piling up. Next, an announcement was made throughout the city. Schools were to have a snow day and would be closed! As days passed, the blizzard finally ended, and everything returned to normal.

The Cold

Its winter and my mom told me to bundle up, so I wouldn't get sick. She also warned me that I might get frostbite because of the extreme wind chill. I didn't listen to my mom and the frigid cold caused my hands to freeze before for the school bell rang. The next day my mom went through the same routine of warning me, I still didn't listen. I wanted to look cool so I didn't wear a hat. As a result, I got frostbite on my ears. Finally, I started to bundle up. But it was too late. I caught the cold my mom warned me about. How I wish I'd listened to her!

Tsunami

The tsunami had a great effect on everyone. Since the tsunami destroyed everything and killed many people, everyone around the world has been donating things. As a result, the places where the tsunami hit may have enough money and supplies to get on their feet and running again. It reminds us not to take our good life for granted.

Tsunami

Many disasters aren't as destructive as the tsunami that took place in 2004. This tsunami was caused by an underwater earthquake. As a result, over 100,000 people died. Since so many lives were taken, many children were left orphaned. It affected many surrounding areas. There was so much destruction a lot of people in South Asia and areas near there were left homeless! As a result, many foundations are raising money for these helpless people.

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____ Your topic sentence is a sentence (not just a title).

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Supporting Sentences:

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____ Your detail sentences are accurate/ make sense.

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____ Your detail sentences are ordered correctly.

*If not – changes to make _____

Clincher Sentence:

____ You have a clincher.

* If not – changes to make _____

____ Your clincher either restates the topic, or makes a comment on the topic.

* If not – changes to make _____

Cause/Effect Paragraph Rubric

Category	3	2	1	Student comments on how to improve:
Paragraph	Included topic sentence, detail sentences and clincher sentence *which all make sense	Topic, clincher, or some detail sentence(s) are confusing.	Missing topic, clincher, or detail sentence(s) do not make sense.	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Signal Words	Uses signal words including: so, so that, because of, as a result of, since, in order to, therefore	Some repetition of signal words or incorrect use of signal word(s).	Missing signal word(s).	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Revision Done	Made most of the changes needed to improve content or organization of paragraph.	Made a few changes to content or organization to improve meaning.	Missing needed changes to content or organization of paragraph.	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Edit	Few errors in punctuation, spelling, or capitalization.	Some errors in punctuation, spelling, or capitalization.	Many errors in punctuation, spelling, or capitalization.	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____

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The Compare/Contrast Paragraph

The writer wants to show how two or more things are similar (comparison) or show how they are different (contrast).

Signal words:

To show comparison - same as, alike, likewise, similar to, similarly, resembles, compared to, in the same way, also

To show contrast - different from, but, otherwise, unlike, however, on the other hand, yet, as well as, even though, although

Directions: Highlight or underline the signal words used in each paragraph.

The Pros and Cons between Owning a Car or a Motorcycle

A car or a motorcycle, which one should I buy? Cars and motorcycles are very much alike. However, there are some major differences. Unlike cars, which only get around 14 km. to a liter of gas, a motorcycle can more than double that distance. Therefore, a motorcycle would definitely save money on gas! Also, compared to a car, a motorcycle is cheaper to buy and has lower maintenance costs. However, a motorcycle can only carry two passengers, but a car can carry several people comfortably. As well, you can drive a car all year round to be protected from the weather. On the other hand, a motorcycle can only be driven in the spring and summer. A car is definitely a better choice, if you live in Manitoba!

Fill in the Compare/Contrast Diagram below.

Motorcycle	Same	Car

Now write your own Compare/contrast paragraph using one of your chosen topics.

Student Samples of Compare Contrast Paragraphs

Computers vs. PS2

Computers and PS2's are very alike, but different in quite a few ways. They're both portable, electronic equipment requiring a modem or screen to play. Most important, they're fun! There are some differences though. Although you can play games on both, only a computer can be used for other activities. On the other hand, PS2's are smaller, and can support multiple players. After comparing the two, I would choose the computer, because it can store more data and it can play downloaded games.

Tennis vs. Badminton

Tennis and badminton may seem very similar, but they're really different. In both sports a racket is used, and you have to move a lot to play. However, in tennis a tennis ball is used. But in badminton, a birdie is used. Also, there is a lot more stalling in tennis when the ball bounces away. On the other hand, in badminton, the birdie just drops and stops. When you know how to play the two sports, you can decide for yourself whether they resemble each other or not!

Books vs. Movies

Although a book and a movie are quite different, they still have similarities. For instance, a book is read, while a movie is watched. When you watch a movie you can't just stop it for a break. However, you can put down a book anytime. A movie lasts for at least two hours. On the other hand, a book can last much longer. Although, they are unique in their own way, a book and a movie are based on a story. They are similar in they both have characters and a setting too! You can reread or watch them both over and over. Although I prefer watching a movie, a book really isn't that bad.

Salsa vs. Hip-Hop

Although there are many differences between Salsa and Hip-Hop, there are also some similarities. Unlike Salsa, Hip-Hop has a more funky rock style. Also, Salsa is more classical in its presentation. The dress is also very different between the two. When I go to Salsa class I dress a lot more professional, but in Hip-Hop I dress more casual and fun. In the end, both are dance classes and you need a lot of practice if you want to get better at them.

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Partner(s) _____

Topic _____

Type of Paragraph - _____

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Clincher Sentence:

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* If not – changes to make _____

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Compare/Contrast Paragraph Rubric

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Paragraph	Included topic sentence, detail sentences and clincher sentence *which all make sense	Topic, clincher, or some detail sentence(s) are confusing.	Missing topic, clincher, or detail sentence(s) do not make sense.	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Signal Words	Uses signal words 1. for comparison: same as, alike, likewise, similar to, similarly, resembles, compared to, in the same way, also 2. to show contrast: different from, but, otherwise, unlike, however, on the other hand, yet, as well as, even though, although	Some repetition of signal words or incorrect use of signal word(s).	Missing signal word(s).	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Revision Done	Made most of the changes needed to improve content or organization of paragraph.	Made a few changes to content or organization to improve meaning.	Missing needed changes to content or organization of paragraph.	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
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Student Samples of the Problem Solution Paragraph

Air Pollution

Air pollution from fossil fuels is one of the worst problems in the world. It can make you sick if you inhale a bit. It can kill you, if you inhale too much! There are many ways to solve this problem by preventing air pollution. One way to help is by turning down the thermostat and wearing warmer clothes. Another way is walking or riding a bike to school, using buses, or carpooling to use less gas. It will also help use up less gasoline and cut down on pollution if you turn off your car when you wait for more than a few minutes while driving. These are only some of the many ways you can help prevent pollution.

NHL Lockout

The NHL has a problem that's causing a lockout. The owners don't want to pay the players as much as they were before (ridiculous amounts). Their solution is a salary cap. They want to have a meeting and both sides give offers. They should compare them until they come up with an agreement. Both sides are to blame for this. The owners started paying the players too much, and that was stupid! However, the players could find it in their hearts to get paid a little less than they've been getting. If both sides will give a little this problem can be solved.

Bullying

One of the biggest problems at school is bullying. People being bullied usually don't tell anyone that they're being bullied. If you are being bullied, a solution to this is to tell a parent or a teacher what's wrong. If possible, stay in a group of friends. This could prevent you being afraid of getting hurt. If you're seeing someone getting bullied you should encourage them to get help. Another problem is bullies want to be and look cool. If everyone just walks away, they don't have an audience. Also you don't have to listen to the things that come out of their mouth. If we all work together, bullying problems can be solved and avoided.

Smoking

Smoking is a problem for many people. Addiction to cigarettes is very bad for them. It causes them to waste their money and that's just the beginning. It can give them lung cancer, make them smell, and rot their teeth. We could and should solve these problems by not selling or making cigarettes anymore. Smoking is pointless and is an expensive way to die.

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Partner(s) _____

Topic _____

Type of Paragraph - _____

Topic Sentence:

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____ Your topic sentence is a sentence (not just a title).

*If not - changes to make _____

Supporting Sentences:

____ You have enough detail/ information.

* If not – changes to make _____

____ Your detail sentences are accurate/ make sense.

* If not – changes to make _____

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Clincher Sentence:

____ You have a clincher.

* If not – changes to make _____

____ Your clincher either restates the topic, or makes a comment on the topic.

* If not – changes to make _____

Problem/Solution Paragraph Rubric

Category	3	2	1	Student comments on how to improve:
Paragraph	Included topic sentence, detail sentences and clincher sentence *which all make sense	Topic, clincher, or some detail sentence(s) are confusing.	Missing topic, clincher, or detail sentence(s) do not make sense.	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Signal Words	Uses signal words including: the problem is, a solution is, the problem may be solved by	Some repetition of signal words or incorrect use of signal word(s).	Missing signal word(s).	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Revision Done	Made most of the changes needed to improve content or organization of paragraph.	Made a few changes to content or organization to improve meaning.	Missing needed changes to content or organization of paragraph.	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Edit	Few errors in punctuation, spelling, or capitalization.	Some errors in punctuation, spelling, or capitalization.	Many errors in punctuation, spelling, or capitalization.	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Adapted from: Piccolo, Jo Anne. *Structures for Reading, Writing,, Thinking*. ECS Learning Systems

The Descriptive Paragraph

The writer presents the properties or attributes of a topic. Its purpose is to thoroughly describe a person, place or thing. Surprisingly, it may be an important part of a report.

Signal words: There are no signal words in a descriptive paragraph! You usually identify it by the topic sentence and descriptive nature.

Directions:

1. Underline the words the author uses to appeal to your senses (sight, touch, smell, taste, hearing).

A Visit to Grandmother's Kitchen

When you walk into my Granda's kitchen, it smells like rich brown cinnamon and rosy applesauce. She says, "Hi honey bun," greeting me with a big bear hug and a sugary kiss. Her kitchen windows are all steamed up with the smells of buttery apple tarts, bubbling up brown and crispy warm from the oven. Grandma pours hot chocolate into a fat, red mug and tops it with whipped cream for me. I swirl a cinnamon stick around in the hot chocolate and lick my lips, getting the last little crumbs of apple tart and think, what a good cook my she is!

The Dentist's Office

I can smell the wintergreen flavored fluoride out in the hall, even before I go into Dr. Smith's office. As soon as I open the outer door, the blast of cool air from the air conditioner hits me in the face making me shiver all over. While I wait for the new nurse in her crisp white uniform to call out my name, I look at the fish in the large blue tank in the corner of the room. The sleek fish dart about playing hide and seek with the plastic snowman at the bottom of the tank. Tiny silver bubbles slip to the top of the tank's surface and break silently while I wait my turn. The nurse calls my name and I enter the inner office. I sit on the white leather chair looking at all the shiny stainless steel equipment. It's my turn.

A Walk in the Garden

The purple and yellow pansies seem to wink at me as I walk through the flower garden. Their little faces whisper, "Good morning!" As I pass the pansies, the tall, regal, purple and white iris nod their heads at me, their green, spiked leaves lead me to the shaded path where the pink impatient flowers gossip in clusters. I smell the sweet aroma of freshly mowed grass. As I approach the stone fountain by the frog pond, I hear the ripple sound of falling water. Small, brown birds chatter as they take their morning bath and trade stories with the peepers who live in the pond. I love my morning stroll.

Now write your own descriptive paragraph using one of your chosen topics.

Student Samples of Descriptive Paragraphs

Evening at the Campsite

The smell of roasting marshmallows washed over me, as I neared the small glowing campfire. My friends and I ate our toasted sugary treats bathed by the warmth of the crackling fire. We listened to creepy stories our camp guide told us until the light of the campfire grew dim. We finally went to our small tents and slid into our cozy sleeping bags. In the end, we fell asleep while listening to the soft rhythm of the crickets chirping.

In the Trenches

During World War II, I fought in the European trenches. I could taste the fear in the air. We were all nervous. At all cost we were to advance as far as we could. I heard the pound of shell after shell of enemy fire shattering the silence. I felt the bone chilling terror that I wouldn't make it. But I had to, for my family, for my freedom, and for Canada!

Arrival in Canada

After hours of waiting in terminals and flying in planes, we finally arrived. Once we entered the airport, the noise of the crowd surprised us. The gate area was bright, and full of people waiting for the arrivals. Many different expressions were on the faces there. Some were happy with tears; others were nervous or excited. We walked through the throng of people and stepped outside where we knew our mom would be waiting. The rush of chilly air cooled our skin, just as we spotted our mom running to us with a huge smile.

Skiing

Do you know skiing how much fun skiing is? The crisp morning snow crunches underneath our skis. I hear a whoosh and my friend streams by leaving two rail marks in the snow like a sleigh. "Come on!" she calls. I follow and we come to another hill that looks like Mount Everest. We inch forward like caterpillars and look down. We give each other a promising look and head for the chair lift. It doesn't get any better than this!

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Descriptive Paragraph Rubric

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Paragraph	Included topic sentence, detail sentences and clincher sentence *which all make sense	Topic, clincher, or some detail sentence(s) are confusing.	Missing topic, clincher, or detail sentence(s) do not make sense.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Signal Words	Uses no specific signal words. May use any to assist in description.	Some signal words used incorrectly.	Mixed up the signal words.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Revision Done	Made most of the changes needed to improve content or organization of paragraph.	Made a few changes to content or organization to improve meaning.	Missing needed changes to content or organization of paragraph.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Edit	Few errors in punctuation, spelling, or capitalization.	Some errors in punctuation, spelling, or capitalization.	Many errors in punctuation, spelling, or capitalization.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

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