

Grading Paragraphs



Grading Level 7-12 Paragraphs

Once you have begun to teach transition sentences to your child, it is time to figure them into your grading paradigm. You will seldom grade paragraphs individually once your child begins joining them into larger works, but we provide this rubric and these instructions for those of you who need to work remedially with students.

Again, a student should not submit work without doing a self-evaluation. Before he hands in his draft, have him complete a proofing sheet (just a checklist) of those skills to which you have made him accountable. For paragraphing, the following criteria are suggested as elements to be inserted within a larger, more general proofing sheet on his paper as a whole:

- * All paragraphs are indented.
- * Each paragraph has a clear topic sentence near the beginning of the paragraph.
- * In each paragraph, all body sentences relate to the main idea and carry the paragraph's overall argument forward.
- * Each paragraph has a conclusion, which ties it back to the overall topic of the paper.
- * The paper flows well. The student has included transition words, phrases, or sentences in order to lead the reader carefully through all the ideas in the paper.

Grading Connected Paragraphs in the Context of a Paper

- * "A" papers will have all of the above features almost completely correct.
- * "B" papers will have most essential elements correct but be missing one aspect in a paragraph in a fairly noticeable way.
- * "C" papers indicate some real issues with the paragraphing. While body paragraphs should be relatively even in terms of length and content, paragraphs in a "C" paper will often be light on facts or too short. (Note that this is a structural problem but also a content issue—a paragraph is usually too short because the student did not have enough facts to fill it.)
- * "D" work is seriously flawed for any number of reasons. There are usually at least two of three main elements missing structurally, or two of three paragraphs are seriously flawed, or perhaps there simply is no introductory or concluding paragraph at all. Usually, paragraphing issues alone will not cause a paper to be graded this low. The paper will also have problems with neatness, lateness, grammar and punctuation, or content.
- * "F" work is failing. As with "D's," "F's" are not usually given for failure in just one area, like the structure of the paragraphs. Rather, a combination of failures gives an overall failing grade.

Using the Rubric

You will not have occasion to grade upper-level students purely on paragraph construction, unless you are working on remedial writing elements. We do not suggest that you use the rubric in this document to arrive at a letter grade. Use instead a rubric designed to grade the overall paper (see the *Writing Aids* section that applies—"Grading Analytical Essays," for instance). This rubric is intended to help you point out to your student where his paragraphing itself is weak or strong.

If you are using the rubric for this purpose, we suggest that you begin by explaining it to your student and highlighting the criteria you will require. (Different students will use different amounts of this chart, according to their various assignments and learning levels.)

Levels 7-12

If a child desires to get an "A," he should know just how to do so! Share your grading criteria with your student before grading his work.

You may wish to make prewriting, neatness, punctuality, and proper formatting into bases for grades as well. If so, add them to your self-checking forms.

We have created a rubric that you may print and hand to your student, after highlighting the boxes of criteria that you will be using when you determine his grades.



Improving Paragraphs

Name _____ Date ____/____/____

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Structure Comments:	<input type="checkbox"/> Paragraphs # _____ & _____ are missing topic sentences or obvious topic phrases. <input type="checkbox"/> In paragraph # _____ & _____, body has sentence(s) not on topic. <input type="checkbox"/> In paragraph # _____, conclusion is weak or unclear. <input type="checkbox"/> Paragraph # _____ & _____ are too short. <input type="checkbox"/> Marked transition sentences have serious flaws. <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Paragraph # _____ is missing a topic sentence or obvious topic phrase, confusing the reader. <input type="checkbox"/> Body paragraph # _____ has sentence(s) off topic. <input type="checkbox"/> In paragraph # _____, conclusion is weak or unclear. <input type="checkbox"/> Paragraph # _____ is too short. <input type="checkbox"/> Marked transition sentences have serious flaws. <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Paragraph # _____ is missing a topic sentence or obvious topic phrase, confusing the reader. <input type="checkbox"/> In paragraph # _____, body has off-topic sentence(s). <input type="checkbox"/> In paragraph # _____, conclusion is weak or unclear. <input type="checkbox"/> Paragraph # _____ is too short. <input type="checkbox"/> Marked transition sentences have flaws. <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Good topic phrases or sentences throughout. <input type="checkbox"/> Good body sentences overall. <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient body sentences/content in each paragraph. <input type="checkbox"/> All body sentences are on topic. <input type="checkbox"/> Good paragraph conclusions. <input type="checkbox"/> Nice transitions.
Content Comments:	<input type="checkbox"/> Information inadequate for assignment, causing problems in paragraph(s) # _____ and _____. <input type="checkbox"/> Information is inaccurate in paragraph # _____. <input type="checkbox"/> Misused or ill-chosen words in paragraph # _____. <input type="checkbox"/> Student included information that the teacher had not approved. <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Information is inadequate for the assignment, causing problems in paragraph # _____. <input type="checkbox"/> Information is inaccurate in paragraph # _____. <input type="checkbox"/> Misused or ill-chosen words in paragraph # _____. <input type="checkbox"/> Student included information that the teacher had not approved. <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Information is inadequate for the assignment, causing problems in paragraph # _____. <input type="checkbox"/> Information is inaccurate in paragraph # _____. <input type="checkbox"/> Misused or ill-chosen words in paragraph # _____. <input type="checkbox"/> Student included information that the teacher had not approved. <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Information is complete. <input type="checkbox"/> Information is accurate. <input type="checkbox"/> Good, concrete words are chosen throughout. <input type="checkbox"/> Student stuck to the information that the teacher requested in the assignment.
Mechanics Comments:	<input type="checkbox"/> Student did not do self-proofing.	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-proofing requirements were not adequately met.	<input type="checkbox"/> Student's self-proofing chart was not submitted, or not completed thoroughly.	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-proofing chart completed; paragraph reflects the student's careful self-checking.