

**152** ENGLISH GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION THAT WORKS!**Figure 9.10** Create Your Own Paragraph

Directions: Here are five sentences that need to be put into an order to make it a good paragraph for the reader. Read each sentence, then number the order that you think will work best. Compare your order with a classmate's.

**Create Your Own Paragraph**—Put these sentences in the order you think will form a good paragraph.

- \_\_\_\_\_ The animals in these lakes and swamps had to find a way to survive the dry season.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Every year some of the lakes and swamps would begin to dry up.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Millions of years ago, a long period of droughts began.
- \_\_\_\_\_ They might completely dry out.
- \_\_\_\_\_ There would only be a few small pools and puddles.

There's a large space here. If it's needed for layout, I'm OK with it.

**THE GRAMMATICAL VOICE**

The grammar we use often depends on our audience. The term for that differentiation of grammar is *voice* and encompasses many terms or metalanguage. We speak of language that is formal and informal, academic, idiomatic, colloquial, slang, jargon, argot, patois, or dialect. Those of us fortunate enough to “become educated” can use all aspects, although we might choose to limit ourselves to only a few. But all of us recognize when we “switch codes,” as when we prepare for an interview, deliver a talk, chat in the teacher’s room, meet family members, hang out with friends, talk to children, send an e-mail, and so forth. Having a range of grammatical voices gives us linguistic and social power, allowing us to mingle, get jobs, read widely, and write more effectively. For students, developing a variety of “voices” is essential to their future.

In Figure 9.11 there are two letter-writing activities, one titled “Formal to Friendly” and the other “Friendly to Formal.” The task for the student is to rewrite each letter and change its voice. Use this activity as a starting point for your students in learning how to “switch voices.”

In the last chapter of this book (Chapter 13), we have added a variety of sentence and paragraph activities which you can use as is or adapt as needed. We have tried to make them lively, content-area oriented, and helpful in expanding both the spoken and written language of your students.

**Figure 9.11** Go From "Formal to Friendly" and "Friendly to Formal"

Directions: Here are two different letters, each written in a different "voice." One is from Harriet Beecher Stowe, an abolitionist fighting slavery and a believer in women's rights who is writing to Susan B. Anthony. The letter by Harriet Beecher Stowe is probably too formal, since both women were working for the same causes and would probably be on very friendly terms. Rewrite Ms. Stowe's letter to Ms. Anthony letter in a much friendlier or informal style.

June 1873

Dear Ms. Anthony:

We have recently received the news that you have been placed on trial for attempting to vote and for advocating the rights of women's suffrage in national and state elections. Your cause is indeed noble, but as you are undoubtedly aware, the political establishment is totally opposed to any such legislation. However, you have my complete support for your endeavors and rest assured that I and my colleagues will do all in our power to prevent any action taken that will dispute your innocence.

Most cordially,

Harriet Beecher Stowe

Now rewrite this informal note to John Adams from Edmund Burke, a member of Parliament in England, just before the start of the American Revolution.

May 1773

Dear John:

I've just heard that a bunch of you in the Colonies are hopping mad over the tea tax. I can understand your feelings, but thinking about dumping tea in the harbor won't get you anywhere. You know George (our king) just isn't that smart, but he'll back down. In a couple of years, he'll forget the tax, which isn't much anyway. In the meantime, switch to coffee. Let me hear from you by the next packet steamer from Boston to London. Give my best to the wife and kids.

Regards,

Ed

## INTERNET SITES

- [http://books.google.com/books?id=4DwjAAAAMAAJ&dq=history+of+paragraphs&printsec=frontcover&source=web&ots=ul0Q9xCpRw&sig=e\\_7zpVUXFILkrYAhwq8an7WHJbY#PPA5,M1](http://books.google.com/books?id=4DwjAAAAMAAJ&dq=history+of+paragraphs&printsec=frontcover&source=web&ots=ul0Q9xCpRw&sig=e_7zpVUXFILkrYAhwq8an7WHJbY#PPA5,M1)

This is an 1894 dissertation about the paragraph from the University of Chicago, and it is fascinating.

- <http://englishplus.com/news/news0300.htm>

This is the history of English grammar rules that found their way into school textbooks and who made up these rules and why.

**202** ENGLISH GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION THAT WORKS!**PARAGRAPHS AND TRANSITIONS**

Writing paragraphs can be tricky, because there is no exact formula. Writers often experiment with what sounds like a paragraph and looks like a paragraph. The following activities will give you practice in putting together separate sentences that seem to make up a whole.

- Figure 13.6—Transitions for History
- Figure 13.7—Transitions for Greek Gods
- Figure 13.8—Transitions for Comparing and Contrasting
- Figure 13.9—Transitions for Dinosaurs

**Figure 13.6** Transitions for History

To write a well-ordered or cohesive paragraph, you often have to use transitions. These are words that tie together or unite ideas. In the following activity there is a list of transitional words, followed by nine sentences. Put the appropriate transitional words in front of each sentence. Compare your answers with a partner. Read your paragraph aloud to your partner and discuss how the transitional words help this story on American history hang together.

**Transitional Words**

at last	furthermore
at the time	however
but	in addition
consequently	nevertheless
despite	repeatedly
eventually	therefore
finally	thus
frequently	

\_\_\_\_\_ the Revolutionary War broke out at Lexington and Concord on April 18, 1775, very few colonists wanted independence \_\_\_\_\_ their differences with England. Most colonists merely wanted the right of self-government from the British Empire \_\_\_\_\_ Parliament and King George refused to allow the colonists to levy their own taxes. \_\_\_\_\_ King George removed the colonies from his protection and blockaded their ports \_\_\_\_\_. The colonists hoped that King George would come to his senses and listen to their arguments. \_\_\_\_\_ the British enlisted the help of hired Hessian troops and incited the Indians to fight the colonists. \_\_\_\_\_. The colonists had no choice but to rebel, \_\_\_\_\_ the embittered colonists declared their independence on July 4, 1776.

Now write your own paragraph using some of the transitional words listed earlier.

**Figure 13.7** Transitions for Greek Gods

Following is a set of notes on four of the gods from Greek mythology. By using transition words, you can write a paragraph for each of these gods using the information from the notes. Here are the transition words, followed by an example of a paragraph about Hades, the god of the underworld.

**Transition Words or Phrases You Can Use**

although, as a result of, even though, however, in fact, nevertheless

**Sample Paragraph:**

Hades, a brother of Zeus, ruled the underworld and controlled its wealth. **Although** he lived in this unwelcome part of the Earth, he was not evil. **In fact**, his job was to protect the dead. **However**, he was not a pleasant character. **As a result of** living without sunshine and flowers, he had a dark and gloomy character. **Even though** he left the underworld from time to time to visit his brother Zeus or other siblings, he was rarely cheerful or pleasant. **Nevertheless**, Hades could be sympathetic and understanding, as when he permitted his wife Persephone to return to Earth for several months each year so that she could see her mother Demeter and enjoy the brightness and beauty of the Earth.

**Notes for Your Paragraphs**

Name of God	Role or Function	Positive or Strong Characteristics	Negative or Weak Characteristics
Zeus	supreme ruler of the Greek gods	fair and just; helped his brothers; despised war	deceived his wife Hera; was easily deceived by others
Hera	wife of Zeus; protector of marriage and married women	helped women in childbirth; inspired heroic deeds	fiercely jealous; inflicted cruel punishments
Athena	daughter of Zeus; goddess of wisdom and the city	sponsored arts and crafts; inspired wisdom, reason, and purity	fierce and ruthless when attacked; unforgiving
Apollo	god of light and truth	never uttered false words; kind and generous to humans	could be unpitiful to humans when angered

**Figure 13.8** Transitions for Comparing and Contrasting

Here is a set of notes about Earth and Venus separated by a Venn diagram. Following the notes is a frame to guide you in writing a paragraph about these two planets. The opening sentence states how these two planets are similar. Complete the rest of the paragraph or paragraphs by using the notes on Earth and Venus. When you have finished, underline the transition words that organize what you have written. Then use these transition words to write your own paragraph or paragraphs on a topic you are studying in class.

(Continued)

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**Figure 13.8** (Continued)

**Earth**

- has magnetic field
- rotates west to east
- 50% cloud covered
- clouds are liquid and ice
- atmosphere is 78% nitrogen and 21% oxygen
- average temperature is 65 degrees Fahrenheit
- vegetation in most areas can sustain life

**Venus**

- no magnetic field
- rotates east to west
- 80% cloud covered
- clouds are droplets of liquid sulfur
- atmosphere is 96.5% carbon dioxide and 3 to 4% nitrogen
- average temperature up to 200 degrees Fahrenheit
- barren landscape does not appear to sustain life

**Both  
Diameter  
Density  
Mass  
Gravity  
Similar  
internal  
structures**

**Frame to Complete Paragraph(s)**

Earth and Venus are considered to be twin planets because they have a similar diameter, density, mass, and gravity, as well as similar internal structures. Venus, however, differs from Earth in several significant ways. First, \_\_\_\_\_. It also \_\_\_\_\_. In addition \_\_\_\_\_.

Unlike Venus, Earth \_\_\_\_\_. It also \_\_\_\_\_. There are other major differences between the two planets. Venus \_\_\_\_\_, while Earth \_\_\_\_\_. Furthermore, \_\_\_\_\_.

So while Earth and Venus are "twins," they \_\_\_\_\_.

**Figure 13.9** Transitions for Dinosaurs

Following is a set of notes about three different dinosaurs.

1. Using the notes, write three separate paragraphs, one for each dinosaur. Indent for each paragraph.
2. Begin with this starting sentence:  
*Three dinosaurs have always interested me.* (Name the three dinosaurs from the notes.)
3. Start your second and third paragraphs with transition words such as  
*"Unlike Allosaurus" or "Another dinosaur" or "Different from..." or "Similar to..." or "In contrast to..."*
4. End with the following sentence:  
*I plan to continue studying about dinosaurs so that...* (Put in your own words so that you have a conclusion.)

**Notes on Three Dinosaurs**

Allosaurus	Ankylosaurus	Diplodocus
meat eater more than 30 feet long moved on two large hind legs used powerful tail for support in walking or standing	plant eater about 10 feet long body covered with bony plates row of spikes on each side of body clublike tail with mass of bone on end	plant eater about 25 feet long head covered with bony armor brain about the size of a walnut

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The verbs in Figure 4.20 go back to Old English and show variations in pronunciation changes (e.g., do, does).

**Figure 4.20** Other Anglo-Saxon Verbs That Show the History of Pronunciation Changes

Directions: These verbs go way back in the history of the English Language or the Anglo-Saxon times. Complete all the forms. Then complete the statements that follow.

Base	Verb -s	-ing	Vowel- Changing Past	Past -en or -n
have	has	having	had	
say	says	saying	said	
do	does	doing	did	done
go	goes	going	went*	gone

- When I completed the verb forms for these words, I noticed that all the verbs had \_\_\_\_\_ forms, but two of these verbs also had \_\_\_\_\_.
- I also noticed that three of these verbs had a \_\_\_\_\_ past. These verbs are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- I then noticed that HAVE does not change to HAVES, but is \_\_\_\_\_.
- Then I noticed that the verb SAY has a different vowel sound when I add \_\_\_\_\_ and a different vowel when the word ends in -d.
- The verb DO changes its vowel sound three times as in (1) \_\_\_\_\_, (2) \_\_\_\_\_, and (3) \_\_\_\_\_.
- Finally, the verb past form for the word GO is \_\_\_\_\_, which is different from every other verb pattern that I know.

\*This is the only form in the English verb system that breaks from the pattern and might be called *irregular*. The form *went* is the past form of the archaic verb *wend*, as to *wend your way*, and became a substitute form for *go*, or as a young child might say, *goed*.

## VERBS BY CATEGORIES

Verbs are complex words that permit speakers to request, command, state desires and wishes, gesture, express thoughts, and create clauses, sentences, paragraphs, and lengthy narratives and expositions. With verbs we can be the actor, the passive recipient, the mover and shaker, the thinker and ponderer, the predicate or the subject. With verbs we can tell the truth or lie; we can express love or hate, fear, or courage. Good speakers and good writers own thousands of verbs and use them well, surrounding them with glorious nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and other parts of language that provide their listeners and audience with rich meanings and images.

What are some of the categories of verbs in the English language? Figure 4.21 gives some examples of verbs that form in the *mind*, verbs that express *locomotion*, verbs that tell us we are making or hearing sounds of *vocalization*, verbs that provide us with ways to “express silence” through *gesture*, verbs that allow us to be *positive*, and verbs that accentuate the *negative*. And these are only some of the categories of verbs which your students might collect, as in the example in Figure 4.22 illustrating verbs that denote positive and negative meanings.

**Figure 4.21** Verbs of the Mind, Locomotion, Vocalization, and Gesture (Add Others)

	The Mind	Locomotion	Vocalization	Gesture and Body Language
A	admire, appreciate	amble	announce	
B	believe	bound	bellow	blink, blow
C	care, comprehend	careen	chant, chuckle	clap
D	desire	drive	discuss	
E	envy, emulate		explain	
F	forgive			
G		gyrate	guffaw	grab
H	hope	hobble, hop	holler	hug, hold
I	imagine, infer			
J	judge	jump		juggle
K	know			kick
L	love	leap	laugh	lunge
M	miss	meander	mumble, mutter	
N	need		narrate	nod
O			opine	offer
P	ponder	prance	pronounce	point, puff, push
Q				quake
R	realize	rocket, run, race, ride	respond	
S	sympathize	stagger, skid, skate, slide, slip, scurry, saunter	speak, scream, shout, snicker	smile, stamp, squint, sign, shake, shiver
T	think	tiptoe	tell	tremble, throw
U	understand	undulate		
V	value			
W	wish, worry	waddle	whisper, whistle	wink, wave
X				
Y				
Z		zoom		

**Figure 5.10** Improve Your Sentences by Adding, Deleting, Substituting, Moving, or Rearranging

Directions: Follow these steps and learn how to turn good sentences into great sentences. Work with a partner.

1. Write this sentence on your paper. Leave lots of room in the margins on the sides, the top, and the bottom of your paper.

**The dog went home.**

2. Discuss these questions with your partner: Does this sentence give the audience (reader) enough information about the dog?

Does the reader know

- What kind of dog?
- How the dog got home?
- When the dog got home?

3. Editing Solutions—Discussion: Would the audience get a better “picture” if we **substituted** the breed of a dog for the word “dog”? Think of a breed of dog to substitute.

Cross out (do not erase) the word *dog* and substitute a breed (e.g., German shepherd).

**German shepherd**

**The ~~dog~~ went home.**

4. Discussion: A German shepherd definitely gives us a better image than the word *dog*. Now think of a verb that helps us imagine how this German shepherd “went” home. Think of a powerful or strong *verb of movement* or *locomotion* (e.g., raced, bounded, flew, drove, etc.).

**German shepherd bounded.**

**The ~~dog went~~ home.**

5. Discussion: Now the reader might want to know when this happened. You need to *add* a phrase or clause that tells “when.”

**The German shepherd bounded home at the break of dawn.**

**~~dog went~~**

6. Discussion: How could you be more specific about the word *home*? What could you *add* or *substitute*?

**The German shepherd bounded home to its master in the country at the break of dawn.**

**~~dog went home.~~**

7. Discussion: Does the sentence have “too many” words after the verb? Or are there any words that might be moved or rearranged to make the sentence “balanced?”

**The German Shepherd bounded home to its master in the country at the break of dawn.**

8. Discussion: Move or rearrange some of the words. What must you do to fix the punctuation?

**At the break of dawn, the German shepherd bounded home to its master in the country.**

**~~dog went home.~~**

9. Discussion: What did you learn about improving a sentence?

**~~dog went home.~~**

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sentence following the instructions in Figure 5.12. We start with a “plain sentence” as a model and take the students through these steps.

### Follow-Up to Sentence Expansion Activity

- Have the students create two taxonomies or a dual taxonomy (as illustrated in Figure 5.11) in which they list breeds of dogs in Column A and verbs of movement or locomotion in Column B.
- Ask each student to select a breed and a verb and write a new sentence (e.g., The schnauzer skated home.).
- Have the students add their own time phrase and an expansion of “home.”
- Ask the students to illustrate their improved sentences.
- Make a lovely bulletin board with a creative title (e.g., EDITORS AT WORK or FROM GOOD TO BETTER TO BEST).

This lesson combines using knowledge of a topic (e.g., dogs) with specific verbs and shows students the basic elements of edited sentence structures.

### Sentence Stretchers

Sentence Stretchers is a lively activity for showing students how to expand sentences with a variety of words and syntax (Rothstein et al., 2007a, pp. 81–82). In addition, this activity clearly indicates the parts of speech by using word order slots rather than definitions. For example, students may have been told that an adjective is a “word that describes.” However, when students do Sentence Stretchers, they observe that words that tell an amount (e.g., eight, many, both) always precede the “adjective” or descriptor as in *eight tall children* or *both brilliant students* and are not adjectives but a separate category called determiners (see Chapter 8, “Return to Parts of Speech”).

Following is an example of a sentence created by using Sentence Stretchers, followed by the procedures for initiating this activity (Figure 5.12). Students will have now expanded their sentences beyond the one-word level and have created “information-bearing” statements that incorporate many parts of speech (e.g., *As the sun rose, twelve graceful cheetahs crawled silently through the jungle.*).

After students complete the template, have them share their sentences. Then ask them to repeat the process independently or in collaborative groups. Have the students create several of these Sentence Stretchers and illustrate one or two of them, putting in all the details in their illustration.

While the students are creating their sentences, set up three large taxonomy charts (ABCs). Head one ADJECTIVES, one ANIMALS, and one VERBS OF LOCOMOTION. Have each student contribute to each taxonomy so that you now have class lists of these categories as a “word wall.” Encourage students to create new sentences from these words, adding phrases that tell when and where. Make a scrapbook of these sentences, or have them put on oak tag strips and display them with illustrations.

[comma]

### Follow Up With Other Verb Categories

By first having students set up a Taxonomy of Verbs of Locomotion, they can now build taxonomies of other verb categories and create different Sentence Stretcher arrangements. In addition, by having students collect these words, they have valuable synonyms for writing. Here are three other verb categories (see Figure 5.13), followed by examples of Sentence Stretchers (see Figures 5.14 and 5.15).

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In Figure 5.11, you can have your students write expansive sentences by writing about a dog and using a verb of locomotion.

**Figure 5.11** Breeds of Dogs and Verbs of Locomotion

Write five (or more) sentences about five different dogs. Use a verb of locomotion for each dog. You can match any verb to any dog (e.g., The *English sheepdog* danced gracefully in the dog show and won first prize.).

	Breeds of Dogs (add others)	Verbs of Locomotion (add others)
A	Afghan	amble
B	Beagle	bound, bolt
C	Chihuahua	crawl
D	Dalmatian, Doberman Pinscher	drive, dance, dash
E	English Sheepdog	edge
F	Fox Terrier	fly
G	German Shepherd	gyrate, gallop
H	Husky	hop
I	Irish Setter	inch
J	Jindo	jog
K	King Shepherd	
L	Labrador Retriever	limp, lumber
M	Maltese	meander
N	Newfoundland	navigate
O	Otterhound	
P	Poodle, Pomeranian	prance
Q	Queensland Heeler	
R	Rotweiler	race, rocket
S	Schnauzer, Scottie	sprint, speed, scurry, soar
T	Tibetan Spaniel	trot
U		undulate
V		
W	Weimaraner	waddle
X		
Y	Yorkshire Terrier	
Z		zoom

# English Grammar Instruction *That Works!*

