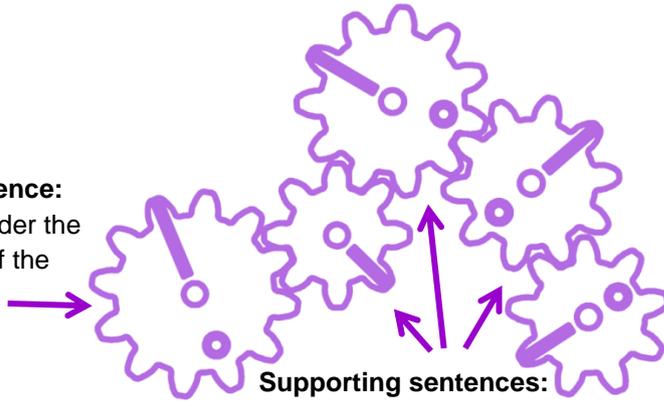


Getting kids writing: one sentence at a time

Writing an effective paragraph

Topic sentence:
tells the reader the main idea of the paragraph



Concluding sentence:
brings the paragraph to an end

Supporting sentences:
gives reasons and examples to build upon the topic sentence

Planning, outlining and writing paragraphs



- Know the purpose and what the reader needs to know.
- Sort notes into a main idea and supporting details.
- Try writing the topic and concluding sentences first, with notes as prompts for the supporting sentences. Include examples.

Planning a paragraph: an example for gathering notes

Example: Year 7 Geography notes for writing a persuasive paragraph about water restriction. Symbols used for efficiency ('+' '-' means positive/negative impact, '↑' '↓' means increase/decrease, '→' means leads to/causes).

Main idea	Supporting details		
	Environmental	Economic	Social
Placing water restrictions on households to deal with drought in Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ↓ water wastage (+) • ↓ stress on resources (+) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • water use ↓ (QLD 38% ↓) (+) • ↑ costs for water (QLD 97c to \$2.32 in '09) (-) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • → community disagreements (-) • possible ↑ violence (-) • all socially responsible (+)

Outlining a paragraph: an example for using the outline

Topic sentence:

Imposing permanent water restrictions is an effective long-term way to deal with drought.

Supporting reasons and examples:

- ↑ costs but ↓ water use (show QLD examples)
- ↓ water wastage and stress on resources (+)
- community unrest (-) but everyone is accountable and the costs are based on usage (+)

Concluding sentence:

There are positive and negative consequences for placing water restrictions on households, however, it is better for environmental, economic and social factors.

Writing a paragraph: an example of the finished product

Imposing permanent water restrictions is an effective long-term way to deal with drought in Australia. Despite increased costs, a decrease in water usage would result in lower wastage and stress on the environment. Queensland, for example, discovered a 38% reduction of use with restrictions. Communities may initially resent the added expense, which could create civil violence and unrest. For instance, the Queensland water price rose from 97c to \$2.32 in 2009. In time, however, working together to respond to the threat of drought could help resolve community disagreements. While there are positive and negative consequences for placing water limits on households, it is better for environmental, economic and social factors.

Note that this sentence incorporates different sentence types (simple, compound and complex) and the technique of starting sentences with a subordinating conjunction (e.g. 'While').

Getting kids writing: one sentence at a time

Paragraphs

Preparing to write paragraphs

Define paragraph

A paragraph is a key organisational feature of written texts. It starts on a new line and deals with a focused idea, theme or description. It begins with a topic sentence/paragraph opener, which indicates how the paragraph will develop, and is then elaborated on in various ways.



Share and discuss effective paragraphs

Find or create content-specific examples of paragraphs. Identify the topic sentence, supporting details (including distinguishing reasons and examples) and concluding sentence. What makes a paragraph work well? Find examples of effective paragraphs to share.



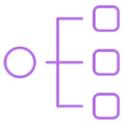
Establish the purpose

What is this paragraph trying to do, for example, inform, persuade, compare, argue, entertain and/or show understanding? What will the reader need to know before reading this?



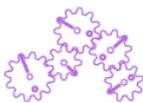
Spend time pre-writing

Pre-writing is intended to present your thinking without having to concentrate on organisation. Gather information for your paragraph first by reading, listening, discussions or reviewing notes.



Sort and eliminate irrelevant information

Establish a clear topic for your sentence and determine how the notes relate. Organise information into main ideas or supporting reasons and examples. Information that is not related to the topic can be discarded or used for other paragraphs.



Structure the paragraph

Draft a topic sentence and concluding sentence with bullet points you're your supporting details. Alternatively, your teacher may provide you with either a topic sentence or concluding sentence (or both) and then all you have to do is fill in the supporting detail bullet points.



Write the paragraph

Use the paragraph outline to write the paragraph, transforming your bullet points into sentences.



Review the paragraph

Check paragraphs for a clear topic sentence, supporting sentences and a concluding sentence. For extension, you can make sure you are using different types of sentences and whether they can be extended or sharpened (see *Stretching sentences: prompts to write more* and *Sharpening sentences*).

Getting kids writing: one sentence at a time

Paragraphs

Preparing to write multiple paragraphs



Decide how many paragraphs are needed

Determine how many paragraphs you will need to write based on the purpose of the task and allocated time. The number of paragraphs should allow you to include the content and thinking processes expected to be in the writing.



Establish the topic, audience and purpose

Be explicit about the overall topic, who your readers will be, and whether you are aiming to inform, persuade and/or entertain. Your teacher may give you the topic or you could choose it together, depending on the context.



Discuss the features, language expectations and key vocabulary

What style of writing is expected? Be clear before writing about the type of text you're making, whether formal or informal language is used, and the kind of vocabulary that is required.



Have a reason for writing

What skills do you need to demonstrate in this piece of writing? For example, are you showing you understand the topic, apply comprehension skills, analyse, compare, evaluate or reflect?



Take notes to help you organise your information

Take notes in a way that supports the writing you are going to have to deliver. Organise the information and sort the main ideas. For example, use a graphic organiser to categorise, compare or make logical connections.



Select main ideas

Establish the main ideas for your paragraphs and determine how the notes relate. Distinguish the main ideas from supporting reasons or examples (e.g. highlighting/underlining). Once you are familiar with this practice, you may be able to organise your notes straight into paragraph outlines.



Outline the paragraphs

Based on the main ideas, outline paragraphs by drafting topic sentences and concluding sentences for each paragraph, with bullet points for supporting details. Your teacher might provide you with topic and/or concluding sentences and you add supporting bullet points to the outline, or vice versa.



Write multiple paragraphs

Use the outline to write the paragraphs, transforming bullet points into sentences. Check if the writing is clearly structured and has a variety of sentences (refer to the *Sentences* sheets if necessary).

Getting kids writing: one sentence at a time

Paragraphs

Planning to write multiple paragraphs

Topic

Audience

Purpose

(Suggestions: to inform, persuade and/or entertain)

Features

Language

Key vocabulary

← everyday

→ formal

The reason for this writing task is to demonstrate that you can:

(Suggestions: to apply knowledge and understanding, apply comprehension strategies, analyse, compare, evaluate and/or reflect)

Paragraph 1

Main idea:

Topic sentence:

Supporting details:

-
-
-

Concluding sentence:

Paragraph 2

Main idea:

Topic sentence:

Supporting details:

-
-
-

Concluding sentence:

Paragraph 3

Main idea:

Topic sentence:

Supporting details:

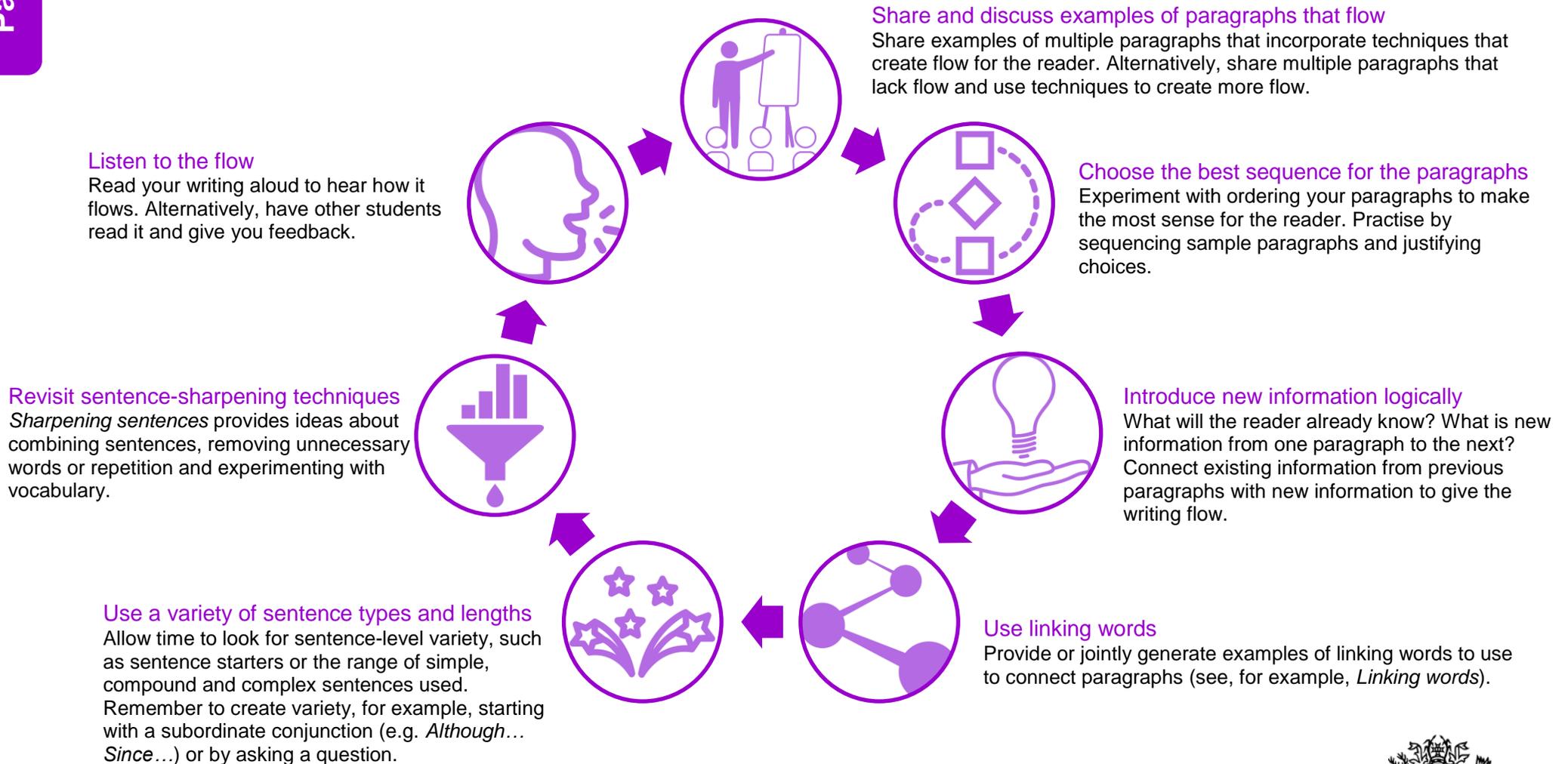
-
-
-

Concluding sentence:

Getting kids writing: one sentence at a time

Preparing to create paragraphs that flow

Flow makes it easier for the reader to navigate text and make logical connections between sequenced ideas. **Cohesive writing** binds different parts of the text together to give it unity, where sentences and paragraphs have strong starts and transitions. When you are revising and editing your work, spend time focussing on cohesion and flow. These suggestions may prompt you to improve the flow in your writing.



Getting kids writing: one sentence at a time

Paragraphs

Preparing to write an effective thesis statement

Define thesis statement

A thesis statement expresses the main idea of the extended writing. It helps to direct ideas and gives readers an understanding about what will be discussed. All the paragraphs in the text should reflect, explain, support or challenge the thesis statement. While developing the thesis statement should occur in pre-writing, it can be refined throughout drafting and editing phases.



Determine the purpose of the thesis statement

For example:

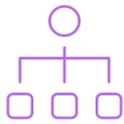
- personal opinion or judgment;
- arguments for or against an issue;
- analysis of the topic or aspects of the topic;
- comparison; or
- other: _____



State the topic



State your opinion or main argument about this topic



Provide reasons why you hold this position



Think of an opposing view about the topic



Provide a reason why the opposing argument has merit but is not substantial



Write the thesis statement