

Unit Seven: Discourse Writing

Objectives of this Unit

At the end of this unit, the students will be able to:

- Identify different types of discourse
- Describe people, place and other things
- Narrate about an incident or a series of incidents
- Analyze the different elements of argument
- Write an argumentative discourse
- Write expository discourse.
- Differentiate between narrative, descriptive, argumentative and expository types of paragraphs.
- communicate through narrative, argumentative, descriptive and expository paragraphs

7. Types of Discourse

The scope of discourse ranges from a paragraph to an extended essay. Traditionally, discourse has been divided into the following patterns of development: description, argumentation, narration and exposition

7.1 Description – is a verbal picture of a person, place, or thing. It is the kind of writing which attempts to appeal to the reader's sense, recreating for him the author's original impression of the subject being described. It is very much concerned with sensory impressions (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch). Description can be objective or impressionistic. Description rarely appears alone in modern writing. It is most often used with narration. We have special sensory words which are very much concerned with description. Some words refer to sensory experiences: to what we see, hear, touch, taste and smell. Because these words call up sensory images, they are particularly effective in description. In the following list, some words could fit into more than one sensory category.

SENSES	SENSORY WORDS
Touch	chill, clammy , cold , corrugated, grainy, gritty, harsh, jarring, knobby, moist, nubby, numb, plushy, rough satiny, slimy, slithering, smooth, sting, tingle, tickly, velvety.
Taste	bland, biting, bitter, nutty, peppery, salty, sour, spicy, sweet, tainted, vinegary, yeasty, brackish, briny, metallic, minty
Smell	acrid, fetid, greasy, moldy, musky, musty, pungent, putrid, rancid, rank, reek, stench, sulphurous, woody.
Sound	bellow, blare, buzz, chatter, chime, clang, clatter, clink, crackle, crash, creak, gurgle, purr, rattle, rustle, screech, snap, splash, squeak, swish, tinkle, whine, whisper, hiss, hum, murmur, pop.
Sight	blaze bleary, bloody, burnished, chalky, dappled, ebony, flame, flash, flicker, florid, foggy, gaudy, glare, glitter, glossy, glow, golden, grimy, haze, inky, leaden, lurid, muddy, roiled, sallow, shadow, smudged, spark, streak, tawny, turbid.

Well-chosen sensory words help a reader to experience what a writer is recording. Notice the use of such words in this description of what two boys smelled, saw, and heard in a dawn visit to the circus grounds.

Example 1

*And to all these familiar **sounds** of birds, car ,people, pet animals, ... chirps, engine-noise, chatter, barks,... to all the sharp and thrilling odors of the trains-the **smell** of cinders, acrid smoke, of musty, rusty freight cars, the clean pine-board of crated produce, and the smells of fresh stored food-oranges, coffee, tangerines and bacon, ham and flour and beef-there would be added now, with an unforgettable magic and familiarity, all the strange sounds and smells of the coming circus....He was **looking** at the great iron-gray horses, four and six to a team, which would be plodding along the road of thick white dust to a rattling of chains and traces and the harsh cries of their drivers....Then, on the circus grounds , the tents were going up already with the magic speed of dreams. All over the place(which was near the tracks and the only space of flat land in the town that was big enough to hold a circus)...*

Example 2

A descriptive paragraph about the delights to be found at Bale National Park in Oromiyya Region by a former student who wishes to remain anonymous.

Bale's summer sunshine makes me delightful. I indulge myself under the shade of the strawberry trees during the summer in Bale National Park in order to bask in its sunshine. Especially when the wind waves the leaves and the sunlight slides through; it feels like velvet patting my body or like a furry cat rubbing me. I like to sit on the bench, which is on the southern shore of the Wabi River. One day, an old Abyssinian dog sat beside me. Although there were many adults jogging, children giggling, and squirrels chasing around, the old Abyssinian was as solid as a rock; he closed his eyes and ears and made his daydream without a pause. Sometimes, when the sunlight stung his nose, he shifted his body one inch to avoid it, and when the flies buzzed around his head, he twitched his muscle or his ear to dispel the greedy flies who shared his sunlight. After absorbing enough energy, he trudged away contentedly. I love to sip this free tranquilizer during the summer in Bale National Park.

I. Descriptions of People

In order to write an interesting description of somebody we must use suitable **nouns** and **adjectives**. When we describe persons, we are concerned with their physical appearance and with their personality. Certain noun and adjectives help us to describe the persons accurately. Here are some examples:

A. Useful nouns for describing a person's appearance

Appearances	Nouns
Age	baby, toddler, youngster, youth, boy, girl, teenager, man, woman, lady, young man, young woman, old man, old woman, elder
Parts of the Face	forehead eyes, eyebrows, nose, nostrils, ears, cheeks, mouth, lips, jaw chin
Parts of the Body	head, neck, shoulders arms lands, legs, feet
Hair	hairstyle, plaits, braids, beard, moustache
Clothes	cloth,fabric;shirt,teeshirt,tie,coat,jacket,trousers,jeans,socks,pullover,s weater;sut overcoat,raincoat,dress,blouse,skirt,shawl,scarf;shoes,sandals,boots,hathat ,glasses, spectacles
Jewellery	Necklace bracelet, ring, earrings, anklet

B. Useful adjectives for describing a person's appearance

Appearances	Adjectives
Age	young, middle-aged, old, elderly; in his/her early thirties / mid forties / late fifties etc,
Face	long, round, oval, attractive, beautiful, un-shaven
Hair	long, medium-length, short; straight, curly, wavy; dark, black, blonde, gray, fair, white, plaited, bald
Forehead	high, low
Eyes	blue, brown, gray
Ears	big, small
Nose	long, pointed, turned-up
Body Build	tall, short, fat, plump, over -weight, thin, slim, slender, skinny, under-weight, broad-shouldered, muscular
Clothes	cotton, woolen, hand-woven, leather, traditional, western, colorful
General appearance	handsome, good-looking; beautiful, lovely, pretty, attractive, well-dressed, smartly-dressed, dressed

C. Useful adjectives for describing a person's personality

happy, cheerful	unhappy, sad, miserable
friendly, pleasant, amusing	unfriendly, unpleasant
kind	unkind, cruel
hard-working	lazy
reliable, trustworthy	unreliable
polite, well-mannered	impolite, rude, ill-mannered
honest, truthful	dishonest, crafty
unselfish, generous	selfish, mean
clever, intelligent, wise	stupid, silly, dull
quiet	talkative
shy	confident
modest, humble	proud, boastful, arrogant

The following example shows how the writer describes his mother. Notice the sensory words used in the description.

1. *This picture of my mother, which was taken fifty years ago, has fascinated me from the moment I began to study it closely. The young woman in the picture has a face that resembles my own in many ways. Her face is a bit more oval than mine, but the softly waving brown hair around it is identical. The small, straight nose is the same model I was born with. My mother's mouth is closed, yet there is just the slightest hint of a smile on her full lips. I know that if she had smiled, she would have shown the same wide grin and down curving "smile lines" that appear in my own snapshots. The most haunting features in the photo, however, are my mother's eyes. They are exact duplicates of my own large, dark brown ones. Her brows are plucked into thin lines, which are like two pencil strokes added to highlight those fine luminous eyes. I've also carefully studied the clothing and jewelry in the photograph. My mother is wearing a blouse and skirt that, although the photo was taken many years ago, could easily be worn today. The blouse is made of heavy eggshell-colored satin and reflects the light in its folds and hollows. It has a turned-down cowl collar and smocking on the shoulders and below the collar. The smocking (tiny rows of gathered material) looks hand-done. The skirt, which covers my mother's calves, is straight and made of light wool or flannel. My mother is wearing silver drop earrings. They are about two inches long and roughly shield-shaped. On her left wrist is a matching bracelet. My mother can't find this bracelet now, despite the fact that we spent ours searching through the attic for it. On the third finger of her left hand is a ring with a large, square-cut stone.*

The following example also shows how the writer describes two persons being compared and contrasted. Notice, too, the sensory words used in the description.

2. *I am amazed myself at how little trouble it is living with and liking two such different roommates. Their physical appearances differ greatly. With small brown eyes and straight black hair to her shoulders, Martha is tall, lean and statuesque. Mary, on the other hand, is tiny. Under five feet tall, she keeps her blonde hair short and fluffy. Looking out over a small nose, her large gray eyes are “funny looking,” according to her. “They are all right if you like cats,” she says grinning. These two girls also have different kinds of interests. Martha likes reading or relaxing quietly in front of the television set. She likes talking to; she will speak to me for hours about a feature in People Magazine or about a Marx brother’s film she watched on Channel-4 until dawn. Her voice quivers with excitement. “Just listen to this,” she will say, her eyes glowing, her warm fingers pressed to my palm to hold my attention. But for Mary the out door life holds more interest than books or screens. At six each morning, in a bright orange sweat suit, she is jogging merrily down University Drive, crunching through leaves for her usual four miles. She swims. She plays tennis. She is a terror at paddleball, smashing shots I have to groan to return. However the most interesting difference between them is their approach to school work. Martha grows tense before an exam. At her desk a small fluorescent lamp throws a pale light on her face as she sits for hours glaring nervously at a page in her biology book. She underlines words noisily and scrawls notes to herself in the margin with a yellow felt pen. Her lips say over and over some key words she wants to memorize. Because only “A” grades satisfy her, she works tirelessly. Mary, on the contrary, takes everything easy, and exams are not exception. Sprawled on the red and white couch, she surrounds herself with cola, corn chips, chocolate bars, apples, and salted nuts.... She jabbars endlessly and jumps up every few minutes to stare out the window, to do a few sit-ups or to splash herself with spicy cologne. Without much effort or an anxiety, she crams enough data in to her head to earn grades that keep her happy.*

Activity 7.1

- List some describing words.
- Discuss how these descriptive words make your writing more effective.

To be an effective writer, you must be able to effectively describe the objects you are writing about. Good descriptive passages are ones that cause us to see what the writer sees.

Activity 7.2: Describing people

As shown earlier, descriptive paragraphs are often used to describe what a person looks and acts like.

Read this example descriptive paragraph. (Notice how the descriptive words are used.) Here is an example of a descriptive paragraph:

I am forty years old, rather tall and I have blue eyes and short black hair. I wear casual clothes as I teach students in a relaxed atmosphere. I enjoy my job because I get to meet and help so many different people from all over the world. During my spare time, I like playing tennis which I play at least three times a week. I also love listening to classical music and I must admit that I spend a lot of money on buying new CDs! I live in a pretty seaside town on the Italian coast. I enjoy eating great Italian food and laughing with the likable people who live here.

Activity 7.3a

Guided writing: Answer these questions about yourself on a piece of paper.

- How old are you?
 - What do you look like?
 - What kind of clothes do you wear? Why?
 - What kind of job do you do? Do you like it?
 - What are your favorite hobbies? Why do you like them?
 - Where do you live?
 - Do you like living there? Why or why not?
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Activity 7.3b

- Ask your friends the same questions as in **Activity 7.3a** and write paragraphs about them.
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II. Descriptions of Places

As a writer, you have to observe a scene around you with great care; and you have to present it faithfully so readers know exactly what you see. Selecting some places filled with colors, noises and people in the midst of actions, you will present a scene that is clear and vivid for any reader to appreciate.

Example 1:

My bedroom is very cosy. It is a small room with thick carpeting and light blue walls. Below the north window is my double bed covered with an imitation of leopard skin bedspread. To the left of the bed against the wall is a nightstand with a reading lamp, an alarm clock, and a portable radio. At the foot of the bed is a wooden stand holding my black-and-white TV. Behind the wooden stand and in front of the closet are three comfortable armchairs. On the east and west walls posters of famous historical and geographical sites are plastered. The holy cross bearing the crucifixion of Christ is hung to the wall along side the portrait of Virgin Mary embracing infant Christ...

Example 2

The front of my apartment building is quite attractive. Three tall, full poplar trees grow beside the sidewalk and shade the small yard. The east half of the yard is enclosed by a white wrought-iron fence and inside the fenced area is a round, sunken cement wading pool, a redwood picnic table with attached benches, and a built-in used brick barbecue pit. The west half of the yard is a manicured bluegrass lawn bordered with blue and yellow pansies. Below the front windows of the building is a beautiful rose garden blooming with red, white, yellow flowers. A cobblestone walkway separates the rose garden from the yard area. The front of the two story-building has a fresh coat of light tan paint with dark brown doors and matching window trim. The sloping red-tile roof overhangs the building a couple of feet and adds to the Spanish style. The entire area is clean, colorful, and nicely laid out.

Example 3

My salon is my favorite room in the house. As I stand at the door looking in , the first thing I see on the far side of the room is a yellow wall, its soft color framing a computer print out picture of my boyfriend Solomon and me. In front of the door, the comfortable arm chairs are placed and, to the left, my night table, holding a beige telephone, a small lamp, and a radio alarm clock. Behind the night table fresh air from my window gently rustles the yellow and green curtains back and fourth. A toy red snack lying on top of the curtail rod smiles down at me. When I pull the door behind me, it squeaks. I feel a burst of air sailing through, caring with it the scent of lemon soup from the bathroom down the hall. As I return to examine the wall where the door is, I see my twelve- drawer bureau. The polished mahogany glistens, showing me my reflection. To protect the wood from scratches, a white dresser scarf sits on top in a neat square. On top of it are a black and white television set, a wooden jewelry box, three bottles of perfume, a baby picture of me in a silver frame. Hanging on the wall beside my dresser is a colander with large black numbers. For October there is a picture of a brown and white kitten playing gently with a ball of wool. When I hear a hissing sound, I realize that the steam is coming up; in the corner below the calendar my lavender –painted radiator clamors for attention. Above it the adjacent wall are three book shelves. The top shelf holds some dusty hard cover novels and my history books on the civil war ; the middle shelf holds the paper back novels , plays and biographies I have collected over the years : and the bottom shelf supports stacks of disco record albums , copies of Ebony, People, and TV guide, loose papers, and all my samples of lipstick and nail polish .after I select a book from one of the five shelves, pull of my socks and shoes, and run my toes through the soft shag carpet, I lie down on the sofa to enjoy my peaceful salon .

Activity 7.4a: Describing Places

- Write a paragraph describing a beautiful location you have been to at some time, entitled "My Favorite Place" (don't forget using descriptive words, adjectives, mood, feeling,)

The following words can help you to write a good description paragraph:

Properties	Measurement	Analogy	Location
size	height	is like	in
colour	length	resembles	above
shape	width		below
purpose	mass/weight		beside
	speed		near
			outside
			north/east/south/west

Activity 7.4b: Describing Location

- Describe where Ethiopia's industry is located.

The following words can help you to write a good description paragraph:

	Examples
in	Most of Ethiopia's manufacturing companies are located in Addis Ababa and Akaki.
above	Addis Ababa is eight thousand feet above sea-level
outside	Many new manufacturing are being built outside the city.
beside	Akaki is located beside Addis Ababa
near	Most of the trade centers of the companies are located near Mercato
north / east / south / west	Akaki is south of Addis Ababa

Activity 7.5: Describing Animals

- Write a paragraph describing what a giraffe looks like.

Properties	Examples
size	Giraffes are big in size . Giraffes are very large, ruminant herbivorous mammals.
colour	Giraffes have a tan coat with brown blotches.
shape	Giraffes have a special shape , having a very long neck and legs and short horns.
purpose	The purpose of the giraffe's long legs is to run fast; a walking giraffe takes steps that are 4.5 m long.

Measurement	Examples
Height	The height of an adult male giraffe is usually about 5.3 m tall.
length	The length of the heart of an adult giraffe is over 60 cm. The length of the neck of a giraffe is 2 m.
width	The width of a giraffe's head is very narrow.
mass / weight	Giraffes weigh up to 1,350 kg.
speed	Giraffes run at a speed of 55 km per hour.

Analogy	Examples
is like	A giraffe is like camels in shape.
resembles	A giraffe resembles camels in shape.

Notice how the above sentences about giraffe are organized to form a descriptive discourse.

Giraffes are the tallest of all land animals. A walking giraffe takes steps that are 4.5 meters long. The long legs of giraffes make them good runners, too. They can easily run at a speed of 55 km an hour. Giraffes live in Africa. But they are only found in certain parts of the continent. You will almost never see them in deserts or thick forests. Giraffes are plant-eaters, or herbivores. Their favorite food is the leaves of trees. For this reason, they like to live where there are a lot of trees. But they almost like to be sure that they can run away when a lion comes. So they stay out of thick forests. Everything about a giraffe is big. Adult male giraffes are usually about 5.3 meters tall and they can weigh as much as 1,350 kilograms. The heart of an adult giraffe can be over 60 centimeters long. It can pump 75 liters of blood every minute. Giraffes have four stomachs and they eat about 35 kilograms of food a day. When a giraffe drinks, it can drink up to 40 liters of water at one time. The neck of a giraffe can be 2 meters long. But a giraffe has the same number of neck bones as you do—only seven!

Activity 7.5

- Choose a picture from a magazine/ book/newspaper/ poster etc. Then write a paragraph describing what is in the picture. (The picture might be of a person, an animal, or a place.)
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7.2 Argumentation – patterns of development in which the writer attempts to support a controversial point or defend a position on which there is a difference of opinion. When one writes argumentation, his main purpose is to convince his reader about some issue, to persuade his reader to take some action. The writer presumes that he and his readers hold different position on a subject. The writer attempts to convince readers through logical reasoning. This argumentation is a process of reasoning in which a series of facts and judgments are arranged to establish a conclusion.

Look at the following model argumentative paragraphs, and notice how they are organized.

Example 1:

Main premise: *The government should introduce tighter gun controls*

Jack Spring thinks that everyone should have the right to own a gun but I don't agree with him. People like him think that the government is infringing our democratic rights when it restricts gun ownership. They think that most people who own guns are responsible citizens who keep the guns for sport and recreation. They also think that the police are unable to stop violent crime and we need guns to protect ourselves. But I think he's wrong. I agree with Josephine Bluff who thinks that guns increase the amount of violent crime in the community. I also think that human life is worth more than sporting shooters right to go shooting on the weekend. And I also think that many of the guns that are kept around the house end being used in violent domestic disputes or teenage suicides.

Example 2:

Main premise: *Students should have to pay fees for university courses*

Joan Sprat (1989:13) argues that the government should provide free university education because such education benefits the whole community. She asserts that the skills that students learn at university are important for the future social and economic development of our nation. Therefore, so this argument goes, the government should invest money in education as it does with other vital resources. According to this argument, when students are forced to pay for their education themselves fewer of them will enrol in higher education courses. However, as John Dawkins (1988:1) explains the government is able to invest the money it gets back into the higher education system so that overall quality is improved. Furthermore, there is money to fund more places for students so that in the future we will not have the shortage of places we had in the past. Moreover, it is unreasonable to expect taxpayers to pay for students' education when those students get well-paid professional jobs after they graduate.

Example 3:

Computer games have been popular for decades now and many households have them. However, it can be seen that playing these games causes social, educational, and personal problems of several kinds both to youngsters and society. Firstly, youngsters who spend a great deal of time in front of a computer screen are not studying, playing sport, socializing or learning about life. The skills which they need in order to interact with others and succeed in the real world are not being nurtured. Moreover, studies have shown that this generation of young males is actually growing less than previous generations due to lack of exercise. Following from this, they are more likely to be overweight and less healthy, so more prone to diseases such as diabetes. In addition, the games themselves are often quite violent and dangerously sexist. For example, there are games which show graphic fighting scenes where the most brutal is most applauded. Women are shown as either sexy, but weak, or as improbable amazons. Violence against women is often part of these games which encourage misogynistic behavior. The language tends to be violent and sexist which further adds to the problems of the lack of interaction and social skills. It is easy to imagine the effects of such games on young minds. If we wish children to grow up to become well adjusted members of society, these games should be more tightly controlled.

A Brief Guide to Write Argumentative Discourses

The art of argumentation is not an easy skill to acquire. Many people might think that if one simply has an opinion, one can argue it effectively, and these folks are always surprised when others don't agree with them because their logic seems so correct. Additionally, writers of argumentation often forget that their primary purpose in an argument is to "win" it--to sway the reader to accept their point of view. It is easy to name call, easy to ignore the point of view or research of others, and extremely easy to accept one's own opinion as gospel, even if the writer has not checked his or her premise in a couple of years, or, as is the case for many young writers, never questioned the beliefs inherited from others.

Want to know what you think about something? Then write an argumentative paragraph. To be fair, however, you'll find that one of the first things you must do is having prior knowledge on the issue. When you pick a topic, you should avoid writing about issues that cannot be won, no matter how strongly you might feel about them. The five hottest topics of our time seem to be gun control, abortion, capital punishment, freedom of speech, and probably the most recent, euthanasia, or the right to die. If possible, avoid writing about these topics because they are either impossible to "win," or because your audience is probably sick of reading about them and knows all the pros and cons by heart (this could put you at a serious disadvantage) if the audience has much knowledge about it. The topics may be fine reading material, however, because most people are somewhat aware of the problems and can then concentrate on understanding the method of argument itself. But care should be taken that if you read one side, you also read the other. Far too many individuals only read the side that they already believe in. These issues cannot be won for good reason: each touches on matters of faith and beliefs that for many people are unshakable and deeply private.

Steps to develop an argumentative Discourse

1. So, what *do* you write about? Pick a well-defined, controversial issue. (Spend some time with the latest copies of several news magazines, watch TV, or listen to National Public Radio to generate ideas.) Readers should understand what the issue is and what is at stake. The issue must be arguable, as noted above. After stating your thesis, you will need to discuss the issue in depth so that your reader will understand the problem fully.

2. A clear position should be taken by the writer. In your thesis sentence, state what your position is. You do not need to say: "I believe that we should financially support the space station." Using the first person weakens your argument. Say "Funding for the space station is imperative to maintain America's competitive edge in the global economy." The thesis can be modified elsewhere in the essay if you need to qualify your position, but avoid hedging in your thesis.

3. Your argument should be convincing. An argumentative essay does not merely assert an opinion; it presents an argument, and that argument must be backed up by data that persuades readers that the opinion is valid. This data consists of facts, statistics, the testimony of others through personal interviews and questionnaires or through articles and books, and examples. The writer of an argumentative essay should seek to use educated sources that are nonbiased, and to use them fairly. It is therefore best to avoid using hate groups as a source, although you can use them briefly as an example of the seriousness of the problem. Talk shows fall into the same category as they are frequently opinionated or untrue.

4. Your premises should be reasonable. Assume that your reader will disagree with you or be skeptical. It is important, therefore, that your premises be reasonable, professional, and trustworthy. By anticipating objections and making concessions, you inspire confidence and show your good will.

5. Once your paper has been written, check every quotation in it for accuracy. Your reader may require that every quotation should be directly copied and included with what you turn in. All quoted matter should be clearly marked on the copy.

In other words, you can follow the following guidelines to write your argumentative essays.

Search for a topic which interests you (perhaps in your major field). Try to come up with something fairly controversial, but avoid subjects that have been overdone (abortion, capital punishment).

Try a heuristic strategy (free writing, brainstorming, clustering, journal writing, journalistic formula, etc.).

After doing the appropriate pre-writing and organizing activities, write a draft which supports a thesis or conclusion of your own. Be sure it is an arguable one so that you can clearly choose one side. At this point some research may be necessary (library, interviews of experts, polls, surveys, experiments, etc.) to find data to support your conclusion more strongly than you can from your own background knowledge.

Structure your argument similarly to the following:

Introduction - Give background or perhaps an illustrative example to show the significance of the subject or the nature of the controversy. Consider stating the conclusion of your argument here as the thesis of your essay.

Refutation - Give a brief statement of a refutation of the opposing view(s) to make your reader aware that you have considered but rejected it (them) for good reasons. This refutation may be more appropriately placed last, just before your conclusion, or even interspersed at effective locations throughout the essay. You must choose the best location.

Presentation of your argument - Throughout the body of your essay you should build your case one point at a time, perhaps devoting one paragraph to the defense of each of your premises, or setting forth your evidence in separate, meaningful categories.

Conclusion - After all your evidence has been presented and/or your premises defended, pull your whole argument together in the last paragraph by showing how the evidence you have presented provides sufficient grounds for accepting your conclusion. You may also add here some conventional device to finish your essay, such as a prediction, a new example, a reference to the example with which you began (now seen in a new light) etc.

Revise and edit, and be sure to apply the critical process to your argument to be certain you have not committed any errors in reasoning or included any fallacies for which you would criticize some other writer.

EVALUATION SHEET

After you have written your argumentative discourse, you should check whether you have written it effectively or not. To check you're the effectiveness of discourse, you can use the following checklist.

	Insufficient (1)	Satisfactory (2)	Good (3)	Excellent (4)
Thesis Sentence	no thesis statement	describes the intention of the paragraph	clearly addresses the question	well-worded and very effectively addresses the question
Supporting Argument	paragraph contains no argument.	paragraph vaguely supports an argument	support for thesis, information is relevant	each sentence backs up thesis, stays on topic, no irrelevant info
Concluding Sentence	no concluding statement, or a contradictory conclusion	conclusion answers the question, but does not fit with previous sentences	conclusion is consistent with rest of paragraph	strong conclusion, effectively proves exactly what thesis said it

				would prove
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COMMON ERRORS OF LOGIC IN ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING (LOGICAL FALLACIES)

If you're lucky, your friends trust you. Your readers, however, probably do not know you well enough to trust you (or distrust you) as a person. They will have to focus on the credibility of your ideas, not on the fact that you are a kind-hearted soul who always tracks down the owner of the extra quarter you found in the soda machine.

Logic is the tool writers use to establish their credibility with readers. When a writer bases an idea or proposal on weak logic, we say that the writer has committed a **logical fallacy**. (Most of us, by the way, build fallacies into our writing--unwittingly, of course--as we struggle to get that first draft on paper. Writing is always a process of trial and error.) Rhetorically speaking, logical fallacies are the equivalent of thin ice. When this ice cracks, your argument is likely to fall through.

A suggestion, then (no . . . actually, this is a requirement of the course): Watch for the following fallacies in your own writing. And once you find them, do your best to get rid of them.

1. HASTY GENERALIZATIONS are based on atypical, irrelevant, or inaccurate evidence.

Example: Of course our students are physically fit; just look at the success of our sports teams this year.

2. FAULTY CAUSE AND EFFECT (POST HOC) is the result of assuming that because B follows A, A must be the cause of B.

Example: Tourism in this city started to decline right after Mayor Scott was elected. To save our tourist industry, let's replace her now!

3. REDUCTIVE REASONING reduces a complex effect to a single cause.

Example: People who want to be healthy should eat turnips. My Aunt Alice loved turnips, and she lived to be ninety-four.

4. FALSE ANALOGIES occur when writers overlook the fact that two things being compared are more different than they are similar.

Example: Why am I required to take certain courses before I can graduate from this school? No one requires me to buy certain groceries before I can leave the supermarket.

5. BEGGING (AVOIDING) THE QUESTION occurs when a writer assumes as true the very point he or she is arguing.

Example: Improving public transportation in this city won't solve highway congestion. Even if public transportation is clean, safe, and efficient, people will still prefer to use their cars.

6. CIRCULAR REASONING occurs when the argument merely restates the conclusion it was meant to support.

Example: The minister is such a good person because she is so virtuous.

7. EQUIVOCATION involves using a term in a completely different way than one's opponent uses it.

Example: My goodness, your honor! It is absurd that I am being prosecuted for stealing a copy of the *Detroit Free Press*. For one thing, we are guaranteed by the Constitution our right to a free press. And look at the name of this newspaper—does it not say *Free Press*?

8. AD HOMINEM ARGUMENTS attack the opponent rather than his or her argument. (*Ad hominem* literally means "against the person.")

Example: Senator Jones' bill on gun control should not be taken seriously; after all, this is the same man who has had at least five extramarital affairs.

9. FALSE EITHER/OR ARGUMENTS assume that only two alternatives exist in a given situation.

Example: The case is clear: either we support the death penalty or we allow crime to run rampant.

10. BAND WAGON APPEALS suggest that readers should accept something because it is popular; that is, everyone else has "hopped on the bandwagon."

Example: A recent poll showed that seventy percent of the American public believes emissions requirements on automobiles have gone too far; therefore, these laws are unreasonable and should be repealed.

11. NON SEQUITURS occur when writers fail to show clear connections between their premise (starting point) and conclusion. (*Non sequitur* literally means "it does not follow.")

Example: Maria loved college, so I'm sure she will make an excellent teacher.

Points to remember about these logical fallacies:

- * Most of the conclusions included in the examples above could be argued. The problem is that the reasoning provided in these examples is insufficient or not credible.
- * The best way to "smoke out" unsound reasoning in your own writing is to ask yourself what your argument takes for granted. Remove those assumptions, then rebuild your argument using stronger support--if such support exists.

7.3 The Narrative Discourse

Narration - is a discourse in which a writer tells the story of something that happened. It is concerned with describing a series of events, happenings or incidents which may be either real or imaginary that lead to a conclusion. It is the kind of writing most people habitually turn to recreation, it is found in short stories and novels as well as in news stories and essays. Rarely does narrative writing occur in pure form; most often it includes description and exposition for additional interest. It usually involves some kind of conflict, its resolution and conclusion.

Brief Guide to Writing Narrative Discourse

Narrative writing tells a story. In paragraph the narrative writing could also be considered reflection or an exploration of the author's values told as a story. The author may remember his or her past, or a memorable person or event from that past, or even observe the present.

When you're writing a narrative paragraph, loosen up. After all, you're basically just telling a story to someone, something you probably do every day in casual conversation. Use first person and talk it through first. You might even want to either tape record your story as if you were telling it to someone for the first time or actually tell it to a friend.

Once you get the basic story down, then you can begin turning it into a paragraph. If you feel that you lack life experience, then you may choose to write about someone else or write about an observation you've made about a recent event. You could write about your children, your parents, or your favorite sport or hobby. The important aspect to remember is that you should have a story. **In a successful narrative paragraph, the author usually makes a point.**

Features

1. The story should have an introduction that clearly indicates what kind of narrative essay it is (an event or recurring activity, a personal experience, or an observation), and it should have a conclusion that makes a point.

2. The essay should include anecdotes. The author should describe the person, the scene, or the event in some detail. It's okay to include dialogue as long as you know how to punctuate it correctly and as long as you avoid using too much.
3. The occasion or person described must be suggestive in that your description and thoughts lead the reader to reflect on the human experience. For instance, I read an excellent student essay that told the story of a young woman forced to shoot several wolves that were attacking her cattle. She told her story and included the inner struggle she faced as she made the choice of saving the cattle or saving the wolves. She shot the wolves, but learned that whatever her choice had been, she would not have been comfortable with it. One of life's lessons is that sometimes there is no right choice, and that was the point of the essay.
4. The point of view in narrative essays is usually first person. The use of "I" invites your readers into an intimate discussion.
5. The writing in your essay should be lively and show some style. Try to describe ideas and events in new and different ways. Avoid using clichés. Again, get the basic story down, get it organized, and in your final editing process, work on word choice.

There is very little mystery to writing the personal narrative paragraph. There is no proper topic for such an essay. An essay can be about a variety of personal experiences. You, the writer, have the right to say what you want about your personal experience. You can write about anything – My child hood, My old neighbors you spent the past with, the harrowing experience of being stuck in an elevator, the best Christmas you ever had, the worst day of your life. No topic or subject is off-limits; therefore there are endless opportunities to write an essay about your personal, point-of-view of what happened. Often the reason behind wanting to write a personal paragraph is unclear. Once the writing begins and the events are recorded and recounted it becomes clear that the writer is searching to find the meaning, the universal truth, the lesson learned from the experience. When writing, rewriting and good

editing coalesce, a personal narrative essay becomes a beautiful thing. It shows how the past or a memory's significance affects the present or even the future.

We all have stories to tell. But facing a blank page is intimidating. Knowing where to begin becomes a real dilemma. A good place to start is with the word I. Write I was, I saw, I did, I went, I cried, I screamed, I took for granted. It is an empowering word. Once you write it on the page it empowers you to tell your story. That's exactly what you are going to do next. Tell the story. Get it all out. Don't worry about how many times I appear in the text. Don't worry how scattered and unfocused thoughts are. Write however your mind tells you to write. This style is often called freewheeling writing or stream of consciousness. Once the story is all down on paper you will go back and begin to shape the paragraph into a form that says exactly what you want it to say about your experience. If you're discouraged over what you've written, back away from it. Let it rest. Take a walk. Do something that distracts your mind from writing the paragraph. Many writers find that even while doing something other than writing, their writing mind continues to work out what needs to be said and continues to uncover the multi-layered associations and voices of what they're writing about.

Personal narrative paragraphs are essentially non-fiction stories, ones that are neatly arranged like a road map that take the reader from point A to point B to point C. In life, and in our own personal experience, things aren't so straightforward as A-B-C. Characters, facts, places, conversations and reporting what happened, where you went, what you saw and what you did isn't always so neatly pulled together. That is your job, as the writer, to pull together all the elements so they bring the reader to the universal truth, the lesson learned or insight gained in your experience. How do you do this? Through re-writing and re-writing.

Each time you redo the story more will be revealed to you. You will get "in touch" with the universal truth. Every rewrite of the story will lead you to the aha! Once you get the aha! the next rewrite will show dramatic improvement. You will be able to arrange events into a chronological sequence that best suits the aha!. When you know the aha! create events, think up examples to better illustrate the theme of your essay. Use the senses when describing anything. Example, ...It was a stellar day. The air had a salty tang to it as it blew off the

ocean. Little white caps broke not more than twenty feet out then rushed to meet the shore. Above me sea gulls screeched and circled in a cloudless blue sky. The sun was in its Spring zenith.... The more descriptive language you use, the more you will place the reader right there in the experience with you. Colorful or hard-driving language are the tools of the paragraph writer.

Paragraph writing forces you to shape your experience until it can be fully understood by others. Use every tool available in the writing craft. Construct dialogue, use metaphors but most importantly, use language with a wide breadth of sensory detail. If you find yourself getting lost, stop writing. Start reading other essays. Every issue of Reader's Digest always has at least two. Read eight back issues of a magazine with personal narrative essays in their content. By osmosis, you'll get the feel of how essays are constructed. Go back and do the rework on yours. Include dialogue, include examples that best support or illustrate the aha! of the experience you're writing about. Beef up the description of a character. Give them succinct, meaningful dialogue that pushes the reader closer and closer to the aha! of your essay.

The next step is to get feedback on what you have written. If someone close to you or someone really intimate with the experience you've written about says, "Hey, that's not the way it happened," don't worry. Little white lies are serving to drive the aha! of the experience into the mind of the reader. Your truth is embedded in your writing. To enable the reader to visualize or grasp the concept, little white lies are a necessity. Listen to the responses of readers, then go back and rewrite the portions that were unclear to the reader.

Next, have someone read the essay aloud to you or you read it aloud into a tape recorder.

Listen to the flow of words. Listen to where the reader stumbles. Listen where pauses fall. Listen to where the reader runs out of breath. These are all clues as to where more refining or tweaking need to be done. Go back and do it! You are close to sitting back in the chair and saying, "Yes! This is exactly what I wanted to say about what I experienced." It is a beautiful feeling. Work to achieve it.

To recap how to write a personal narrative paragraph follow these points:

- A. Write “I” on a blank page.
- B. Tell the story as it flows from your mind.
- C. Let the story rest in its scattered, unfocused form.
- D. Begin rewriting. Shaping events in a way to best suit what you want to say.
- E. Rejoice when the aha! of your experience is revealed.
- F. Re-write, re-write, and re-write. Little white lies are okay.
- G. Use language that is full of words that tap into the senses.
- H. Get feedback from a reader.
- I. Re-write.
- J. Have the essay read aloud. Listen.
- K. Fine tune and tweak.
- L. Grin from ear-to-ear when everything on the page reveals the aha! in the experience perfectly.
- M. And – Kudos on a job well done!

As one of the modes of writing, the narrative offers writers a chance to think and write about themselves, to explain how their experiences lead to some important realization or conclusion about their lives or about the world in general. Each of us has memories of times that have been meaningful, of times that have taught us lessons about ourselves or others. Through the narrative essay, we have the chance to record those experiences as the supporting evidence to substantiate our new understanding.

Two crucial first steps in planning a narrative essay are selecting an incident worthy of writing about and finding the central, relevant, salient point in that incident. To do this, writers might ask themselves what about the incident provided new insights or awareness primarily for themselves (but possibly for others too). Finally, writers incorporate details which will make the incident real for readers.

Also, a **narrative paragraph** can be an effective, interesting way to integrate significant background information into a variety of different essay types. Even if the essay as a whole primarily uses another method of development, the narrative paragraph can be incorporated into an essay to support a topic sentence in a particular paragraph and to establish a bit of ethical appeal at the same time. I am thinking here of how effectively former Presidents Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton were at incorporating some small personal narratives into speeches, press conferences, or interviews. Both might be talking about a larger subject, say the economy, and both would slip in a small aside about a conversation they had had with a local merchant, who taught them how important it was to push the particular economic program that the President was advocating in the larger speech. What's more, such narrative additions can help you as the writer create ethical appeal with your audience: the readers often look at such personal narrative favorably, seeing them as a touch of "realism" in an otherwise dry, esoteric, or abstract discussion.

However, whether you use narrative as the rhetorical mode of discourse as a whole or just of a single paragraph within a discourse, there are some principles and conventions of the narrative that readers commonly expect.

Principles of Narrative Discourse

Once you have chosen your subject, you should keep two principles in mind.

1. Find a generalization which the story supports. This is crucial, and perhaps the defining characteristic between a narrative-as-story and a narrative-as-paragraph. The generalization will be the thesis of your paragraph, will say something that the story itself then illuminates or shows to be true. This generalization can be quite personal; it does not have to capture a truth about humanity as a whole or about the essence of the human condition. It simply needs to capture a truth about your life and use the story, the narrative experience, to illustrate its importance to you. In this way, it then has meaning to the readers as well.

Remember that ultimately you are writing an paragraph, not simply telling a story.

2. Remember to incorporate details of your story that not only illuminate your thesis, but also engage your readers' imagination and make the story "real" for them as well. On the Specific and Concrete Detail page, I have some advice about how you can do this.

Conventions of Narrative Discourse

In writing your narrative paragraph, keep the following conventions in mind.

1. Narratives are generally written in the first person singular, i.e., *I*. However, third person (*he*, *she*, or *it*) can also be used. Which person you use most often is a function of whose perspective is being captured in the narrative. If it's your story, use *I*; if it's a story about what happened to a friend, use *she*. That's logical and simple.

Yet, writers can and do play with perspective for stylistic effect. For example, Jeffrey Zeldman writes his web blog in the first person *plural*, using *we* to refer to himself. (This is a device often called the "royal *we*" since a former British monarch had a propensity for referring to herself in the first person plural, as in "We are not amused." This effect helps Zeldman create a distinctive narrative voice, at once a bit humorous and friendly, at the same time.

However, be consistent. If you begin your narrative in the first person singular, say, use that throughout.

2. Narratives rely on concrete, specific details to make their point. These details should create a unified, dominant impression. Again, see specific details for more information.
3. Narratives, as stories, should include these story conventions: a plot (so tell your readers what is happening), including setting and characters; a climax (a peak experience often leading to the thesis, the important realization); and an ending (explaining how the incident resolved itself, also alluding to how the narrative's thesis comes to its full realization).
4. Speaking of narrators, although the first or third person singular is the most common narrative voice in a narrative essay, other possibilities exist as well. Consider using

- interpolated tale (a "twice told tale") to add some flair. An interpolated tale, used by the likes of none other Charles Dickens and Joseph Conrad, are stories within stories, where the character in one story goes on to tell a story that illuminates and adds meaning to the larger story as well. It's a tricky effect to pull off, but a nice effect when used well.
5. Speaking of plot, remember that most stories follow a simple time line in laying out the narrative. Chronological order is the rule. So feel free to break that rule, when appropriate, if you can think of a way use a different time order to enhance your story. For example, flashbacks are a wonderful device to merge the present and the past all at once.
 6. Speaking of characters, it is often true that the most memorable characters are those who have flaws. So feel to use stories that reveal human weakness as well.

Supplementary note on narrative discourse

The first important thing to remember about a narrative paragraph is that it tells a story. The author may write about

- an experience or event from his or her past
- a recent or an ongoing experience or event
- something that happened to somebody else, such as a parent or a grandparent

The second important thing about a narrative essay is that the story should have a point. In the final paragraph, the author should come to an important conclusion about the experience that has just been described.

Notes:

1. The sample paragraph begins with a general statement, "Learning something new can be a scary experience." This statement introduces the subject of the essay, which is a particular learning experience that the author had. The use of "I" in the essay indicates that what is being described is a personal experience.

2. The paragraph is essentially a story about something that happened. The author gives sufficient details about the people, place, and events so that the reader gets a clear idea of how the author feels about them. In the essay, the author "stood timidly" and the teacher "smiled" and was "patient." These words indicate the author's fears and the sense of security provided by the teacher who helped the author get over her fear.
3. In the final sentence of the paragraph, the author reflects on the larger meaning or importance of the experience described. The author concludes that learning to swim has helped her to feel more confident about herself in other new situations. The idea that self-confidence comes from conquering your fears is something that all people can relate to. This is the point of the story.
4. The paragraph is well-organized. After the introduction, the author describes the experience as it happened in time -- going to the pool the first day, having the first lesson, and the result of the subsequent lessons. The author might have chosen, however, to talk about the things she learned in order of their importance or difficulty.
5. The writing in a paragraph should be lively and interesting. Try to engage the reader's interest by adding details or personal observations. Sharing personal thoughts and details invites the reader into author's world and makes the story more personal and more interesting.

NOTE:

Since a narrative relies on personal experiences, it often is in the form of a story. When the writer uses this technique, he or she must be sure to include all the conventions of storytelling: plot, character, setting, climax, and ending. It is usually filled with details that are carefully selected to explain, support, or embellish the story. All of the details relate to the main point the writer is attempting to make.

To summarize, the narrative paragraph

- is told from a particular point of view
- makes and supports a point
- is filled with precise detail
- put the series of happenings in sequence as does any story
- uses vivid verbs and modifiers

Look at the following Examples of Narrative Discourse.

Example 1

Senait is a very determined woman who gets what she wants. When she was forty-eight years old, she went to college for the first time. She received a bachelor's degree in science in four years. At age fifty-two, she entered medical school, and she was the oldest student in her class. She spent six years in medical school and finished in the top twenty-five percent of her class. At fifty-eight, she began interning in the Black Lion Hospital working ten-hour shifts in the emergency ward. When she completed her internship, she stayed on in the emergency ward as a fully licensed physician. This was the most thrilling achievement of her life. She worked at Menelik Hospital for three years and then opened a higher clinic in her hometown of Awassa. She practiced medicine until she was seventy-five years old. And she is a truly remarkable person.

Example 2

When I was about five years old, I remember doing a lot of exciting things. We had a large mango trees growing behind our house, and my sister and I climbed them in the summer. One time I fell out of one of the trees and landed on my head, but I was not badly hurt. We also played baseball in the backyard with the neighbor kids, and I remember we used my mother's dishes for home plate and the bases. We rode our bikes all over the north end of the town, and we raced through the alleys after a train, splattering water and mud to each other. The high school was only a block away, so we walked there in the summer, jumped the fence, and skated around the cement corridors until a custodian chased us out. Finally, there was a big vacant lot beside our house where we played cowboys and country men almost every Saturday. It seems like I did nothing but play when I was young.

Brief Summary of how to write a Narrative Discourse:

Purpose: The narrative paragraph tells about one main incident or happening. The author brings the incident to life so the reader shares the experience. It should be written in *logical order*. It describes what a person does over a period of time.

How to Write the Narrative discourse

- Have a topic sentence that *arouses* the reader's interest. You can describe a scene or introduce characters.
- Build your paragraph around *one* main incident. Here is where your action takes place.
- Write the event in the *order* that it occurred. *Do not* skip around.
- Your ending should *satisfy* your reader's expectations. Bring your paragraph to a close.

Signal Words and Phrases:

- next, then, while, after, first
- after while, a little later, at the same time, during the morning, later that night

Read the following narrative paragraphs, notice how words like 'later' are used to connect what happens.

1. Yesterday evening I got home from school around 4 o'clock. My mother had dinner prepared which we ate as soon as Dad came home from work. After eating, I helped mother clear the table and do the dishes. After we got the kitchen cleaned, I had to sit and do my homework. Mother always says, "No television until your homework is done". I finally got my math finished, so I went into the family room and turned on the television. I was watching American Idol, when the phone rang. It was my best friend, Amy. I talked to her for awhile then it was time for bed. I put on my pajamas and turned on my favorite CD. I finally started to get sleepy around 9:30. The next thing I knew, mother was calling me to get ready for school.

2. Yesterday evening I got home from work at 6 o'clock. My wife had prepared dinner which we ate immediately. After I had cleaned up the kitchen, we watched TV for about an hour. Then we got ready to go out with some friends. Our friends arrived at about 9 o'clock and we chatted for a while. Later we decided to visit a jazz club and listen to some music. We really enjoyed ourselves and stayed late. We finally left at one o'clock in the morning.

3. My name is Haile Belay. I am 65 years old. I was born in south Gondar, and lived there until I was 10 years old. Then I moved to Addis Ababa with my parents and three older brothers. In my younger years, I had many different jobs. I worked hard and saved my money. By 1978 I had saved enough money to start my own retail business. The business was successful, and I retired in 1992. My hobbies are studying the stock market and playing “kirar”. I have seen and done a lot in my long life. I am a lucky and happy man.

Activity 7.6

- Try to write a number of similar paragraphs about what you did last weekend, on your last holiday, etc.

Activity 7.7

- Write a narrative paragraph using the following prompt.

Think about your high school life, and the things you used to do. Write a story about the days, months and years you spent with your teachers, classmates, and friends.

7.4 Exposition - is patterns of development that expresses or explains an idea, object or phenomenon. In expositions, the material which is communicated is primarily information, i.e., the writer provides information about and explains a particular subject. So when you write exposition, your purpose is to make clear to the reader that how something works, how something is made, or how something happened. patterns of development within exposition include giving *examples*, detailing a *process* of doing or making something, analyzing *causes and effects*, *comparing and/or contrasting*, *defining* a term or concept, and dividing something into parts or *classifying* it into categories.

Expository Paragraph Frames

As it is mentioned above expository paragraph frames provide a structure for retelling information presented in expository text. They are based on the principle that information in exposition is structured in a way that is logical and serves to make the information clear to the reader. In effect, the organizational structure-- the composition-- of the text provides the structure for its comprehension. If this is to be true, however, the student needs to be familiar with the various structures that authors employ and to have practice in utilizing those same structures in comprehension. The purpose of expository paragraph frames is to teach students the structures of text they can expect to encounter in what they have to read.

There are five basic ways in which authors may choose to organize information in expository text:

1. Description-- in which a topic is introduced and followed by its attributes;
2. Sequence-- in which a topic is introduced and followed by details that need to be presented in an order;
3. Cause/effect-- in which an event or act and its effects are described;
4. Comparison/contrast-- in which the similarities and differences in two or more things are presented;
5. Problem/solution-- in which a problem is presented followed by one or more solutions.

Procedure

Using a procedure such as paired reading, students are first asked to read and retell the selection they are studying. Meanwhile, the teacher will have created a paragraph frame for the text that students can work together to complete. The frame is made of a series of incomplete sentences (or sentence starters) that the students can complete by using information from the text. The resulting paragraph should summarize (and simplify, where possible) the original passage.

For example, consider the following introductory paragraph from Microsoft's *Encarta*, a multimedia encyclopedia; provides information about and explains how the body works: The Circulatory System

Blood from the entire body is transported to the right auricle through two large veins: the superior vena cava and the inferior vena cava. When the right auricle contracts, it forces the blood through an opening into the right ventricle. Contraction of this ventricle drives the blood to the lungs. Blood is prevented from returning into the auricle by the tricuspid valve, which completely closes during contraction of the ventricle. In its passage through the lungs, the blood is oxygenated, that is, saturated with oxygen; it is then brought back to the heart by the four pulmonary veins, which enter the left auricle. When this chamber contracts, blood is forced into the left ventricle and thence by ventricular contraction into the aorta. The bicuspid, or mitral, valve prevents the blood from flowing back into the auricle, and the semi-lunar valves at the beginning of the aorta stop it from flowing back into the ventricle. Similar valves are present in the pulmonary artery.

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