

## Paragraph Writing- A Stylistic Process

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**Abstract:** Very less study has been carried on paragraph writing, now a days the art of paragraph writing is very important for students, researchers, academicians and professionals if they want to write effectively and express their thoughts in an impressive manner. The art of writing demands two things- competence of the subject and deep knowledge of the stylistic process for arranging the subject in a proper form. The second thing is equally important as it focuses on the manner of writing. If the ideas are properly formed and arranged in a piece of prose writing, it casts a good impression on the readers. This formation through the stylistic process is generally termed as paragraph, a distinct unit in prose. A paragraph may comprise with one or more than one sentences as the situation demands. Therefore, there is no fixed rule for the length of a paragraph; short paragraphs are preferred by the readers. Since the paper is concerned with the stylistic process for developing a paragraph, it becomes important to know about various elements of the writing style. A paragraph is a combination of different kinds of words and sentences arranged in a systematical order. It also requires some useful devices for achieving unity, coherence and emphasis in order to give it impressive and effective form. Thus, it can be said that paragraph writing is an intellectual activity and, therefore, it requires constant practice and proper learning of its stylistic process.

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### Introduction

“The ease in writing comes from art, not chance/As those move easiest who have learned to dance” (Malhotra, 2000). Ease in writing means undisturbed state or free flow of movements in writing, which is achieved only when one knows this art properly. The art of writing requires at least two important things- knowledge and understanding of the subject and the stylistic process for setting the subject in a proper form so that a good paragraph could be developed. Since subject varies from person to person and situation to situation, stylistic process remains the same for most of the times. So it is necessary for a writer to know about the stylistic process which covers not only language patterns but also some useful devices in order to develop a good paragraph. This is what presented in this paper entitled ‘Paragraph Writing- A Stylistic Process.’

A paragraph may be defined as a distinct section in prose writing, usually consisting of some sentences dealing with a single idea. Since there is no fixed rule for the length of a paragraph, it may fall into a single sentence, especially in dialogue form or contemplative prose writing. Short paragraph are preferred. The purpose of paragraph writing is to treat one aspect of the topic in an attractive and successful manner. “Paragraph tells the reader where the topics begin and end, thus helping them assimilate the contents in an organized manner.” (Raman and Sharma, 2009).

A paragraph is a combination of words and sentence so arranged as to make a complete sense. A single word may present the smallest idea or “a vivid picture” (Boulton, 1966).

Since words are the smallest units of a paragraph, they are of different kinds- noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb, preposition, conjunction and interjection. Broadly they can be divided into four categories- structural words (auxiliaries, prepositions, conjunctions, and interrogatives), substitute words (pronoun), content words (person, place, things, qualities, action and main verbs) and distributive words (negative or affirmative distributions through adjectives and adverbs). Since words are the important parts of a paragraph, they should be selected on the basis of their usefulness, popularity, universality, applicability and regional and structural values. “Large the vocabulary, better the expression” (Chaddha, 2001)

Therefore, a writer should have a good store of words including synonyms, antonyms, on word substitution, homophones and confused words with a list of other commonly used words, so that he could use them as per the requirement.

A single sentence may reveal the complete thought. Therefore, it should be short, not very lengthy. It should also have clarity, simplicity, consistency and completeness. In this regard, William Shakespeare writes, “brevity is the soul of wit”, but it should not be achieved at the cost of clarity and

completeness. It can be achieved through the avoidance of long-winded sentences, unnecessary repetition, redundancy and other distracting elements. Since clarity and simplicity go hand in hand, adequate punctuation, clear pronoun references, correct word order and simple and familiar words and easy expressions should be used in paragraph writing. Consistency here means logical arrangements of ideas as well as the use of appropriate linking, agreement of verb with its subject and suitable diction and connectives. "Writing is a complex creative activity, highly formal, learned and specialized, consisting of unity and diversity, a synthesis of order and disorder" (Singh, 2010).

A piece of writing always demands to be purposeful, reader-oriented and result-oriented. Therefore, it is important to know the basic requirements of a good paragraph- unity, coherence and emphasis. Unity here means a thing consisting of parts that form a whole. In another words unity denotes the development of a single idea in such a manner that every sentence in the paragraph should assist or enlarge that idea. Coherence means logical linking of different sentences in a paragraph. And emphasis denotes force or importance given to some particular words, points or sentences so that the most important idea could emerge from the paragraph.

As it is said that 'unity' is the theory of oneness, it gives one form to different components or sentences to deal with the central idea or thought. Therefore, the paragraph should focus on the topic sentence for achieving unity. Every topic sentence should be constructed in a defined order. There are six useful devices to develop a paragraph- inductive order, deductive order, question to answer order, chronological order, enumeration order and linear order.

In inductive order, a writer moves from particular points to the general points. Ideas, arguments and information lead finally to the conclusion or the topic sentence, which usually becomes the last sentence of the paragraph. In deductive order, a writer moves from the general points to the particular ones. The general points help in getting the central idea or conclusion. This order is very popular among the present writers. Question to answer order uses the strategy of asking a question in the beginning and the answer to it helps in developing the paragraph. Chronological order is used to relate things through time dimension. It helps in moving things from one time dimension to another time dimension and as a whole it gives some united thought or ideas. Enumeration refers detailed account of ideas in a connected series. In it, visible markers like 'firstly', 'secondly', 'thirdly', 'finally', etc are used for the extension of the paragraph. Linear order denotes

arrangements of statements in a line series. One point leads to another point in a natural way, if they are placed systematically. All the sentences coming after full stops are linear in nature and, therefore, they come in progressive form in the paragraph.

The word 'coherence' denotes consistency, especially of points or statements connected logically in the paragraph. In a way, it is the method of connecting ideas in a good manner. This provides coherence to the paragraph for which the following devices are very helpful- pronoun, repetition, synonyms and connectives.

Pronoun is a word used for noun and it may help in connecting the present statement to the earlier statement. Repetition literally means the act of doing something a second time. Repetition of some important words or phrases helps in linking different ideas in the paragraph. But one thing is very important to be practiced that repetition is used for continuity and sustaining charm and, therefore, unnecessary use of it can spoil effectiveness in the paragraph. Synonyms mean words having the same meaning and signification as another. This device may be useful as it helps in avoiding unnecessary repetition in the paragraph. Connectives are used in the beginning of a sentence to reveal linking between the new statement and the preceding one. Some of these connectives are- 'therefore', 'however', 'so', 'then', 'moreover', 'further', 'secondly', 'thirdly', 'finally', 'and', 'but', 'thus', etc.

The term 'emphasis' denotes power or strength that is given to some particular words, points or statements in the paragraph. It highlights the main points or the topic sentence. Emphasis is achieved through balance of statements, making words or points stand out, space given to special terms, repetition of ideas, etc.

## Conclusion

Good paragraph is developed through the proper use of words and sentences and some appropriate devices for achieving unity, coherence and emphasis. All these things are part and parcel of the stylistic process, which helps in developing a paragraph in an impressive and effective form. Since paragraph writing is an intellectual activity, it demands constant practice and learning of its stylistic process for the proper formation of a paragraph.

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Abnish Singh is **Assistant Professor**, Dept. of Humanities, Teerthanker Mahaveer University, Moradabad (U.P.), India. He has been teaching English and Communication Skills to both Undergraduate and Post-graduate students for the last nine years. His areas of academic and research interest

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Janvijay, Moscow, Russia) and Book of the Year Award (2011) from The Think Club ([www.thethinkclub.com](http://www.thethinkclub.com)), Michigan, USA for his contribution to Hindi and English literature.

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