

## The Expository Paragraph

### Purpose:

The expository paragraph is the presentation of information, opinions, or ideas. It exposes something about a topic. There are two types of expository paragraphs:

- To explain facts or convey information
- To persuade or argue an opinion

### How to Write the Expository Paragraph:

- **T:** Topic Sentence (thesis) - Clearly state your point in the topic sentence.
- **E:** Examples and Facts - Support your opinion with facts and examples (research).
- **E:** Explain your fact or examples.
- **C:** Concluding Sentence - Summarize in a memorable way.

### Labelling Sentences Using TEEC

- We can label the sentences in a paragraph using TEEC in the following way.
  - Label the topic sentence with “T”.
  - Label all example and explanation sentences with “E”.
    - Label each sentence that has a new idea with an “E” and number. For example, E-1, E-2. These sentences would have two different ideas.
    - For each sentence that is related to the previous idea, label with the corresponding number and a letter. For example, if the next sentence is related to E-1, which was the previous sentence, label it E-1a.
    - If the sentence after E-1a is related to E-1, label it E-1b. If the next sentence is related to E-1, label it E-1c, and so on and so forth.
  - Label the conclusion with “C”.

### Example of an Expository Paragraph:

#### Label the sentences in the following paragraph using TEEC.

I hate mosquitoes because they annoy me while I am outside. For example, whenever we have cookouts, they want to swarm all around the food. Also, when I go fishing with my Dad, we always have to wear bug spray. The bug spray always stinks to high heaven! Then, if you do not want to use bug spray, the only other way to get them to leave you alone is to wear long sleeves. Yet, who wants to wear long sleeves when it is hot outside? Nothing ruins your day like bloodsucking mosquitoes.

## The Art of the Expository Paragraph

The task of every expository paragraph is to prove one aspect of the thesis or to provide background or explanatory information that makes it possible for another paragraph to prove one part of the thesis.

The topic sentence is to the expository paragraph what the [thesis statement](#) is to the paper. Most paragraphs offer a topic sentence; no paragraphs offer more than one topic sentence. That topic sentence must be clearly related to the thesis, and everything in the paragraph must support and/or explain that topic sentence. Most readers expect to find the topic sentence early in the paragraph, but there is no rule stating that the topic sentence must appear first in the paragraph.

Please be sure that your paragraphs reveal their relationships to the previous paragraphs.

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## Sample Coordinate Paragraph

1. My apartment is disorderly around midterms because I am stressed.
2. Books are stacked up on tables, on top of cabinets, and even on the floor—wherever I last read them or set them before bedtime at 2 a.m.
2. Also, the kitchen table generally has notebook paper, pens, clips, and used staples spread across it, leftovers from the papers I've been writing or the notes I've been recopying to meet last-minute deadlines or to study for tests.
2. My bed remains unmade each morning as I dash out of the house barely in time to make it to class after only a few hours sleep.
2. The kitchen sink is half full of dishes when I wake up because by the time I get to bed I'm too sleepy to wash them.
2. Worst of all, the trash is lined up in three or four bags next to the kitchen door because it can't be my priority. (Robbins 114)

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## Sample Subordinate Paragraph

1. Preschool teachers across the nation are concerned about the surge of pretend "violent" behavior they are witnessing on playgrounds as a result of the newest Power Ranger blitz.
  2. Three-year-olds don't seem to recognize that they can hurt each other by performing Power Ranger kicks and hits.

3. Injuries occur more frequently than they have over previous superhero stunts, partly because unlike Superman and Batman, these are animated superheroes who are also "regular teenagers" (actors) during part of the show.
  4. What appeals to the children most is this ability to "transform" into figures who can do only what animated heroes do.
  5. The resulting confusion between reality and fantasy when children think they can be animated characters is dangerous because real children cry and bleed. (Robbins 114)

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### Sample Combination Paragraph

1. Both Lincoln Steffens and Alan Simpson, in their articles on education, believe that to be educated in the true sense of the word means to be actively sceptical and intellectually aggressive.
  2. Steffens states that "everything in the world remains to be done or done over," that "everything is still in the air waiting to be researched and rewritten."
    3. He implies that no real student just sits back and absorbs what he or she is taught.
    4. The application of what he or she is learning is important, and the student should recognize that this learning can be demonstrated only by upgrading something he or she learns about.
  2. In agreement with this view, Simpson talks about looking deeper, past the "sham."
    3. One should be able, according to Simpson—and Steffens would agree—to listen and detect a false argument, to assess its inaccuracy.
    4. According to Simpson, taking notes from a lecturer and accepting tradition is a sham, but to argue with he lecturer or to challenge the tradition is a sign of education.
    5. This assertion can be compared to Steffens' demand that the educated revise the intellectual world.
    6. The key word for both writers seems to be "action." (Robbins 115-16)

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### Practice Paragraph

From Gordon Allport's *Religion and Skepticism*

No subject within the psychology of religion has been more extensively studied than conversion.

Various facts are fairly well established.

One is that the average age for conversion, like that for the rejection of parental systems of belief, is sixteen, although there is evidence that in recent years the trend is toward an earlier age.

One suspects that the impact of movies and radio has sharpened the emotional susceptibilities of children, so that the blandishments of evangelists, if responded to at all, are effective at an earlier age than formerly.

We also know that the frequency of conversion experiences varies with cultural conditions.

Children in rural areas and in families holding a stern theology are more susceptible than are city children, especially those associated with churches that practice confirmation.

Finally, the frequency of abrupt conversions is certainly less today than it was fifty years ago.

In the time of our grandparents it was not uncommon for whole families to attend revival camp-meetings and to return home with the adolescents formally converted. (qtd. in Robins, 110-11)