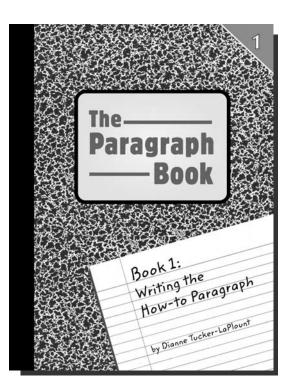
# **The Paragraph Book** Book 1: Writing the How-to Paragraph



By Dianne Tucker-LaPlount Recommended for grades 5–8

Designed for the middle school LD student, *The Paragraph Book* follows a clear and innovative step-by-step format that provides instruction in the four basic strands required in content area curriculum and standardized tests. Examples, writing prompts, and chapter quizzes allow the instructor to model and assess and give student writers ample opportunities to apply new skills.

**Lesson 1**, taken from *Book 1: Writing the How-to Paragraph*, introduces students to the format of a How-to Paragraph and the FNTF formula for paragraph writing. It also introduces a graphic organizer and includes a review. Try this lesson with any students who have special needs in language arts.

## Three easy ways to order:

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## **Recommended Companion Material**

See our Companion Material recommendations on page 11 for great materials that complement The Paragraph Book series.



# YOUR HOW-TO PARAGRAPH

# **LESSON 1: GIVING INSTRUCTIONS**

# **THE HOW-TO PARAGRAPH**

A paragraph is like a family. In a family, all the members are related. In a paragraph, all the sentences are related.

Below are two groups of sentences. One group is a paragraph; the other is not.

- A. A baby humpback whale is 15 feet long when it is born. That's about as long as a car. Sewing buttons on a shirt is difficult. The wind blew the screen door off the porch.
- B. Dragonflies are among the world's fastest insects. Many dragonflies can fly at speeds up to 30 miles per hour. Their wings beat so fast that they can appear perfectly still in the air.

Which group of sentences is a paragraph, A. or B.?

If you picked B., the second group, you're correct because all the sentences in that group are closely related.

 A paragraph should have a single topic. The topic is what the paragraph is mainly about.

Choose the correct answer. In the second group of sentences above, the topic is

a. why dragons have wings.

b. the eating habits of dragonflies.

c. how fast dragonflies can fly.

## THE FNTF FORMULA

#### COOKING UP A PARAGRAPH

 A formula is like a recipe. It tells how to put something together the same way every time.

A recipe is useful for cooking or baking. A formula is useful when you're writing a paragraph. How?

When you can't think of anything to say, the words of the formula help you get started.

You don't have to worry about organizing your paragraph. The words of the formula do it for you.

This lesson will show you how to use a formula to create a How-to Paragraph. A How-to Paragraph is a paragraph that gives instructions. It tells how to do something.

Here is the formula for writing a How-to Paragraph:

First,	
	Next,
	Then,
	Finally,
	Then,

▼ Memorize this formula: First, ... Next, ... Then, ... Finally, ....

You will use it again and again. It is called the FNTF formula: *First*, ... *Next*, ... *Then*, ... *Finally*, ...

Say the words out loud to fix them in your memory: *First*, ... *Next*, ... *Then*, ... *Finally*, ....

WRITING THE HOW-TO PARAGRAPH

#### A HOW-TO PARAGRAPH: EXAMINE CAREFULLY

Here's an example of a How-to Paragraph. Read the paragraph and look closely at how it is put together. See if you can answer the questions below.

How to Open a Jar of Pickles

First, place the jar of pickles on a counter. Next, hold the jar with one hand and grasp the lid with the other hand. Then, turn the lid until it is loose. Finally, lift the lid off the jar.

1. What is the title of this paragraph?

2. Why is this paragraph called a How-to Paragraph?

3. The purpose of the paragraph is to give instructions on how to open a jar of pickles. Can you tell the paragraph's purpose just by reading the title?

4. How many sentences does the paragraph have?

- 5. The formula for writing a How-to Paragraph is FNTF (*First, ... Next, ... Then, ...*). Does this paragraph use the FNTF formula?
- 6. Are the formula words in the correct order?

7. Which word does the first sentence start with? \_\_\_\_\_

- 8. What punctuation mark comes after that word? \_\_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Which three other words in the paragraph have a comma after them?

The writer of the paragraph on page 5 was given the title: *How to Open a Jar of Pickles*. He made a list of words that came to mind before he started writing the paragraph. He ended up using all of the words except *put* and *cover*. He organized his information in a flow chart using the FNTF formula.

#### Word List:

put	hold	grasp	turn	lift			
place	with one hand	CONER	until	off			
counter	the other hand	lid	loose				
Title:	How to Gran a Day of Picklay						
	How to Open a far of Pickles						
FIRST:							
	place jar on counter						
	prine procession and a second second						
Ļ							
NEXT:							
	grasp lid						
¥							
THEN:							
	turn lid until .	loose					
¥							
FINALLY:							
	lift lid off						
	soope sooce sopp						

WRITING THE HOW-TO PARAGRAPH

5

## THE COMPLETE PARAGRAPH

The writer then wrote the paragraph on another piece of paper, like this:

How to Open a Jar of Pickles First, place the jar of pickles on a counter. Next, hold the jar with one hand and grasp the lid with the other hand. Then, turn the lid until it is loose. Finally, lift the lid off the jar.

In four sentences, he produced a complete, well-written paragraph.

# WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE?

In other words, whom are you writing your paragraph for?

A How-to Paragraph tells how to do something: how to use a telephone, how to fix a flat tire on a bike, even how to pop a balloon.

When you write a How-to Paragraph, make your instructions clear and simple.

Think of the person who will read your paragraph. Pretend that your reader is someone who knows nothing about phones or bicycles or balloons.

For example, pretend you are giving instructions to a visitor from the past. Let's say this person lived thousands of years ago. She comes from a time when people lived in caves and made their tools from stones and bones. Let's call her Ms. Pebble.



This Stone Age time traveler can capture giant mammoths. She can rub sticks together to make fire. She can decorate the walls of a cave. But she has no idea how people in our society do even the simplest things.

Pretend our visitor doesn't know how to open a jar of pickles.

She has never changed a light bulb.

She even needs to be told how to turn on a faucet to get a glass of water.

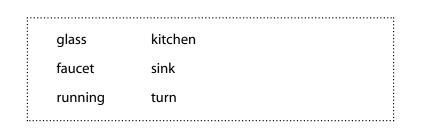
You're going to have to make your instructions clear and simple if you want this Stone Age stranger to understand them.

**ASSIGNMENT 1** Your teacher will give you your paragraph-writing

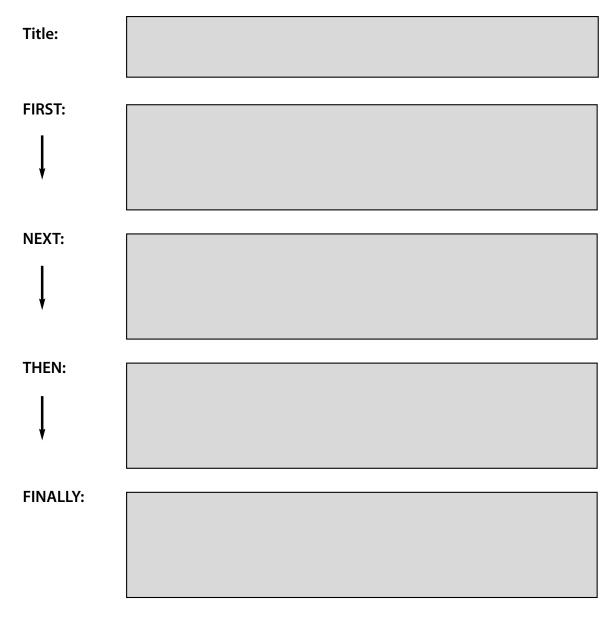
assignment sheet. It tells you the title and what to do.

Before you begin, study the vocabulary words on the next page. They go with your paragraph title. You can use the vocabulary words to help you as you write your paragraph. You don't have to use all the words. Choose words of your own, if you like. A flow chart is there to help you get started. You can fill in the flow chart by thinking about your instructions in steps.

# VOCABULARY for Paragraph 1: How to Get a Glass of Water







## **REVIEW OF LESSON 1**

Circle the letter in front of the correct answer.

- 1. A paragraph is a group of sentences that are closely related. Read the two groups of sentences below. Which group is a paragraph?
  - a. In New Mexico, there is a mountain of rock almost 300 feet high called Sky City. The mountain is flat on top. Native Americans have lived in this tiny city on top of a mountain for over 800 years.
  - b. When the toast burns, our smoke alarm goes off. For best results, tomato plants need plenty of sunshine and water. An alligator can go for many months without eating.
- 2. A formula is like a
  - a. recipe.
  - b. cake.
  - c. smoke alarm.

d. puddle of water.

- 3. A How-to Paragraph tells
  - a. a story.
  - b. how to do something.
  - c. about your feelings.
  - d. about time-travelers.
- 4. The order of words in the FNTF formula is

a. First, ... Next, ... Then, ... Finally, ...

b. First, ... Then, ... Next, ... Finally, ...

c. First, ... Finally, ... Then, ... Finally, ...

- d. First, ... Finally, ... Next, ... Then, ...
- 5. The FNTF formula is used in writing a

a. word.

b. letter.

- c. sentence.
- d. How-to Paragraph.

- 6. The purpose of a How-to Paragraph is to
  - a. tell a story.
  - b. give instructions.
  - c. invite someone to an event.
  - d. announce an event.
- 7. You can tell the purpose of a How-to Paragraph as soon as you read the
  - a. paragraph.
  - b. last line.
  - c. title.
  - d. first word.
- 8. When you write a How-to Paragraph, pretend you are giving instructions to someone from the past. This will help you make the instructions in your paragraph
  - a. clear.
  - b. long.
  - c. confusing.
  - d. disorganized.
- 9. A topic is
  - a. the top of the page.
  - b. what the paragraph is mainly about.
  - c. the first sentence of a paragraph.
  - d. the last sentence of a paragraph.

Number correct: \_\_\_\_\_ out of 9

**Lesson 1 QUIZ** Now your teacher will give you the quiz for Lesson 1.

## **Recommended Companion Material**

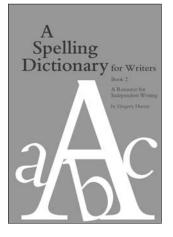
EPS offers a wide range of products and programs that complement the language arts activities in *The Paragraph Book*. We recommend the following products to help students develop their grammar and language skills.

#### Game Plan: Building Language Skills with Games

Recommended for grades 4–8

*Game Plan* is a new series of reproducible sourcebooks for teaching important elements of the English language. Designed for middle school LD or reluctant students, the books teach language arts skills in cooperative, interactive, and meaningful ways. Each volume provides minilessons, student worksheets, and skills-based games. *Game Plan* is a great supplement to the middle school reading and writing curriculum.





#### A Spelling Dictionary for Writers, Book 2

Recommended for grades 5–8

This comprehensive but accessible reference tool provides the correct spellings of more than 5,000 frequently used words. A thesaurus offers alternatives for overused words and expressions, and thematic lists help students write about the major curriculum areas. An excellent resource, *A Spelling Dictionary* improves students' compositions and fosters competent and resourceful writers.

#### **Ridgewood Grammar**

Recommended for grades 3–5

These grammar worktexts teach students to use correct mechanics for clear, effective writing. Each lesson gives definitions and examples followed by exercises. Writing activities allow students to practice new language arts concepts in context.



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