How to write a paragraph:

1. **Topic sentence (top bun):**
   
   This sentence introduces the paragraph’s topic, and is usually the heart of the paragraph’s message.

2. **Supporting sentences (patty of beef / chicken / fish / tofu, veggies, cheese, etc.):**
   
   These sentences support and explain the idea(s) of the topic sentence. Write a separate sentence for each major idea.

3. **The concluding sentence (bottom bun):**

   This sentence has two jobs:
   a) To conclude the paragraph by paraphrasing the topic sentence (using slightly different words than those of the topic sentence).
   b) To make a smooth transition to the next paragraph.
How to write an essay:

1. The opening paragraph(s) (top bun):

   This paragraph introduces the essay topic and includes the thesis statement. The thesis statement is the heart of the essay's message; it is a sentence that declares the writer's position on the topic. Also announce the major ideas that support the thesis.

2. The supporting paragraphs (patty of beef / chicken / fish / tofu, plus veggies, cheese, etc.):

   These paragraphs support and explain the position declared in the thesis statement. Write a separate paragraph for each major idea announced in the introduction, and in the same order.

   Make smooth transitions between paragraphs. (Think of the ketchup, mayo, mustard, relish, etc.)

3. The concluding paragraph (bottom bun):

   Using slightly different wording than was used in the introductory paragraph, the writer paraphrases the thesis statement. The concluding paragraph can also be a time to review the essay's major ideas. Finally, the writer can offer personal opinion (using the pronoun "I") and even raise new concepts or questions.
Types of Writing: Narrative, Descriptive, Persuasive, and Expository

1. Narrative Writing:

- Presents a sequence of actions taking place over a period of time. Storytelling
- Usually chronological, but can have flashbacks and flashforwards.
- Includes time markers, verb tense markers, and clock time references to present a sequence of actions.

  a) Time markers: then, when, at that time, before, after, while, next, later, first, second.

  b) Verb tense markers:
     i. simple past: Aragorn decapitated the ugly orc.
     ii. past perfect: Legolas had skewered the cave troll before it fell.
     iii. past progressive: Gandalf was turning around when the Balrog snared his ankle.

  c) Clock time references:
     “The aliens abducted him at four o’clock.”
     “It took Buffy two minutes to slay the vampire.”
     “Romeo fell in love with Juliet within seconds.”

2. Descriptive Writing:

- The word “describe” comes from the Latin “describere,” meaning “to sketch or copy.”

  a) Naming and Identifying:
     “The squirrel’s bulging eyes glared at me in the dark; its pointy ears alert and its tiny hands and feet poised to attack.”

  b) Detailing:
     - Answers questions such as: What size is it? How many are there? What is it made of? Where is it located? What is its condition? What is its use? Where does it come from? What is its effect? What is its value?
     “The squirrel’s bulging eyes glared at me in the dark; its pointy ears alert and its tiny hands and feet poised to attack.”

  c) Comparing:
     “Eggplant is as tender as squash, as nutritious as broccoli, and tastier than zucchini.”

  d) Sensory Description:
     - Sight, hearing (including onomatopoeia), smell, touch, and taste.
     - Synesthesia: using words that normally describe one sense to describe another:
3. Persuasive Writing:

- The goal of persuasive writing is to convince the reader to adopt your claim. To do this, you should present a carefully reasoned, well-supported argument that takes into account other points of view. Be sure to use the following tools when defending your claim:

  a) Clear and exact wording: The way a claim is worded is as important as the argument used to defend it. Avoid vagueness and ambiguity when announcing your thesis!

  b) Facts and statistics: Use facts and statistics from reliable sources to support your claim and earn the trust of the reader. Current almanacs, encyclopedias, research studies, and legitimate web sites are potentially excellent sources. Always provide proper documentation in order to give credit where it is due!

  c) Authorities: Quote or refer to an authority on the subject to further reinforce the validity of your argument.

  d) Anecdotes: Anecdotes are brief, true stories that illustrate, explore, and provide evidence for your claim. They usually come from first-hand experience.

  e) Scenarios: Whereas an anecdote is true, a scenario is a hypothetical story.

  f) Cases: Like anecdotes, cases are factual and come from first-hand knowledge. However, cases always summarize observations of people, and are lengthier than anecdotes. For example, case histories are an important part of the work of psychologists, doctors, and social workers.

  g) Textual evidence: Quote or refer to texts that are applicable to your argument. For example, if your persuasive essay is based on a particular novel, then you should regularly cite the novel to back-up your ideas. Integrate bits of the text you are evaluating or interpreting into your own paper and build your argument on these bits.

  h) Acknowledge and accommodate readers’ concerns: Anticipate your readers’ potential objections and questions, and integrate them into your composition. When you disarm opposing viewpoints, you show confidence in your own opinions. The trick is to refute the opposition without being arrogant or disrespectful.

4. Expository Writing:

Expository writing sets out to explain a concept and inform the reader. Your paper should have:

- a well-focused subject and thesis,
- an appeal to your readers’ interests,
- logical planning and organization,
- clear definitions of unfamiliar (or key) terms and concepts,
- appropriate writing strategies, and
- careful use of sources.

Expository compositions are most effective when the writer combines narrative, descriptive, and persuasive elements with classification and division, comparison and contrast, and cause and effect strategies.
Narrative Writing and the Elements of Fiction

Narrative Writing:
1. Presents a sequence of actions taking place over a period of time.
2. Is usually chronological, but can include flashbacks and flash-forwards.
3. Uses time markers, verb tense markers, and clock time references.
* BE SURE TO CHOOSE ONE DOMINANT VERB TENSE (PAST OR PRESENT), AND STICK TO IT!

a) Examples of time markers: first, second, before, all of a sudden, at that time, while, meanwhile, until, when, then, after, next, later.

b) Examples of verb tense markers:
   1. Simple past: Gandalf met Bilbo in Hobbiton.
   2. Past perfect: After Frodo had returned to Bag End, he found the ring.
   3. Past progressive: Gollum was watching the Fellowship from a distance.

c) Examples of clock time references:
   1. Sauron summoned Saruman at three o’clock in the morning.
   2. It took Aragorn five minutes to slay the army of orcs.
   3. Within seconds Frodo had the ring in his hand.

The Elements of Fiction:
A. The plot is the framework of the story, and it consists of six main parts:

1. The introduction has four purposes:
   a) to gain the reader’s interest.
   b) to introduce the main character and other protagonists (and sometimes the antagonists).
   c) to introduce the setting (the time and place).
   d) to foreshadow (to give clues for) what might follow.

2. The initiating incident ends the introduction by injecting conflict. Conflict is a clash of opposing forces or characters; it may be external or internal.

Types of conflict:
1. Person vs. person
2. Person vs. society
3. Person vs. nature
4. Person vs. self (two elements within a person struggling for mastery)

From the initiating incident’s conflict, the protagonist discovers his or her goal.

3. The rising action takes up the bulk of any story; it is the adventure the main character experiences while trying to achieve his or her goal. Conflict builds during the rising action.

4. The climax is the point of greatest conflict or intensity in the story. It is usually the turning point of the protagonist’s fortunes—he or she either achieves or does not achieve his or her goal.

5. The falling action is the final unravelling of the plot following the climax. Here mysteries are solved and misunderstandings are set straight.

6. The conclusion is the end of the story; it can foreshadow continuation of the plot!
The Elements of Fiction (continued):

B. **Characters:** the author develops a character in three ways:
   1. By the narrator’s comments.
   2. By the character’s own actions and words.
   3. By the comments of other characters in the story.

**Character types include:**
1. **Round characters:** have many-sided and complex personalities.
2. **Flat characters:** have simple, one-sided, and predictable personalities.
3. **Dynamic characters:** significantly change their perspective during the course of the story.
4. **Static characters:** do not change their perspective during the course of the story.
5. **Stock characters:** *stereotyped* figures who appear regularly in literature, film, or TV (Examples: the mad scientist, the nerd, the jock, the cheerleader, the soldier).

C. **Setting:** the time and place in which the story occurs.

D. **Mood:** the emotional atmosphere of the story (Examples: dark and gloomy, tense, peaceful, light-hearted).

E. **Theme:** a central lesson or insight that the reader learns from the story. It must be expressed as a *statement*. For example, with the film *Finding Nemo*, you could not simply say that “trust” is a theme. However, you could say that a theme of the film is that “a parent must eventually trust his or her child to make his or her own decisions.”

F. **Flashback / Flash-forward:** the story goes back in time to show what happened in the past, or jumps forward to reveal the future.

G. **Foreshadowing:** clues or hints the author gives us about what will happen later in the story.

H. **Protagonist:** the main character in the story or a character who supports him or her.

I. **Antagonist:** a person or force that opposes the main character.

J. **Suspense:** The quality of the story that makes the reader uncertain about the outcome.

K. **Point of View (of the narrator):** the perspective from which the story is seen or told:
   1. **First-person:** the story is told by one of the characters in his / her own words.
   2. **Omniscient:** the narrator is outside the story and has complete access to the thoughts and feelings of all characters. (Godlike!)
   3. **Limited omniscient:** the same as omniscient, except that this narrator only has limited access to the thoughts and feelings of some or all characters. (Semi-godlike!)
   4. **Third-person:** the narrator is outside the story and does not have access to the thoughts and feelings of characters. Imagine an intelligent fly with miniature cameras and microphones; the fly can only reveal a character’s thoughts by what the character says and does.
# The Writing Process

## 1. TOPIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrow your topic:</th>
<th>Focus your writing on a main idea or argument:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- After you know your topic, narrow it to a manageable size.</td>
<td>- Develop a thesis statement that briefly expresses your point of view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Large Mammals of North America</em></td>
<td><em>The natural habitat of North American black bears is being lost to development at an alarming rate.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 2. STRATEGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the purpose of your writing?</th>
<th>What point of view will you use?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- You can write to entertain, describe, persuade, or to explain/define.</td>
<td>Fiction: You can write in either the first person or the third person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Deciding what the purpose of your writing is will give insight into how to write. For example, if you are writing to persuade, you might include examples that prove or give support to your claim.</td>
<td><em>First:</em> I walked down the street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is your intended audience?</td>
<td><em>Third:</em> She walked down the street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- You write differently depending on audience (e.g., friend vs. employer).</td>
<td>Non-fiction: It is best to avoid the first person singular pronoun “I”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Adjust your style and language for each audience.</td>
<td>What form will you give your writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- If you want to persuade, know your audience’s position/beliefs.</td>
<td>- Different forms (e.g., essay, short story) have different requirements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 3. CONTENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research your topic thoroughly:</th>
<th>Tip: when you take notes, immediately jot down the source’s author, title, city of publication, publishing company, and publication date. This information is useful for writing a Works Cited list and Bibliography.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Start general—encyclopedias, CD-ROMs—to get a broad view of the topic.</td>
<td>Make an outline:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Go specific—books, magazines, Internet, interviews—to get more detail.</td>
<td>- As you take notes, form general ideas about your topic. Take those ideas and make a general outline (point-form plan) of your composition.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Take notes as you go:</th>
<th>Write down relevant information.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write down relevant information.</td>
<td>- Taking too many notes drowns you in information, making it harder to write a coherent paper in which everything fits together.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 4. WRITING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Write your first draft:</th>
<th>Revise your draft:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Begin with a brief, interesting introduction paragraph. Include your thesis statement within the introduction.</td>
<td>- Read it out loud slowly, listening for awkward words, sentences, and punctuation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Each body paragraph develops a major idea mentioned in the introduction. Be sure to use strong topic sentences. Vary the lengths of all sentences.</td>
<td>- Take out redundant phrases (ones that repeat what has already been said).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Vary the lengths of paragraphs, and make smooth transitions between paragraphs.</td>
<td>- Proofread for spelling and grammatical errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The concluding paragraph should return to the idea in the thesis statement.</td>
<td>- Clarify any vague or ambiguous sentences.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Participate in peer-editing if possible.</td>
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</table>

| Write the final draft! | |