

# COMPOSITION (PARAGRAPH) MODELS

These paragraph models (skillfully written by Mr. Schoch himself) will assist you in organizing your own ideas for writing.

## EXPOSITORY PARAGRAPH

(written to explain a process or problem step-by-step)

It's easy to find the area of a rectangle. First, find the width by measuring one of the rectangle's short sides. Next, determine the figure's length by measuring one of its long sides. Last, multiply these two numbers. The resulting number, which should be recorded in square units, is the area of the rectangle.

(A topic sentence begins this paragraph. The rest of the paragraph is written with sequencing words, which are underlined here in the example, but should not be in your paragraph).

## PERSUASIVE PARAGRAPH

(written to convince someone of something)

Main Street should be closed to traffic on Sundays. By eliminating traffic during the weekly Sunday flea market, you are ensuring the safety of the families who visit our town. The majority of Main Street's usual traffic consists of delivery trucks and commuters, and neither of these would be using the street on a Sunday. By closing the street to traffic we can also make more space available to entertainers and food vendors. While one or two drivers may be temporarily inconvenienced, the majority of residents and visitors would benefit from such a change.

(The topic sentence states the writer's opinion. The detail sentences give support, or reasons, for the opinion. The most important reason is usually given first).

## **NARRATIVE PARAGRAPH**

(written to tell the reader a story or event)

We had a great time on Uncle Harold's farm last Saturday. For breakfast we had eggs that we picked right out of the boxes in the hen house. After breakfast we spent the morning feeding the animals and grooming the horses. Next came lunch, which consisted of fresh corn on the cob and hot dogs. We had a hay fight in the loft, and then went swimming out beyond the cornfield in the old swimming hole. For a city kid like me, a visit to the farm is a real treat.

(The topic sentence helps to establish the who, what, where or when of the paragraph. The rest of the paragraph is written in time order. Time order words are underlined. This short sample is considered an **anecdote**; a longer selection would be a **story**).

## **DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH**

(written to describe an experience using sensory words)

As you walk down the block, you can smell Mama's house before you even see it. The enticing aroma of sauce and meatballs fills the neighborhood. As you get closer you can hear the laughter of the family in the front room, and Mama's singing in the kitchen. No handshakes or hellos are allowed as you enter this house; everyone gets a hug, from youngest niece to oldest grandfather. Mama gives you the biggest hug, and then thrusts a plate of pasta into your hands and shoos you to the table. Even though you don't live there, you feel like you've come home when you're in Mama's house.

(Notice that all the senses are present here. The reader gets to hear, smell, feel, and touch what Mama's house is all about. The tasting can only come next! Notice that the topic sentence appears at the end; it is the culmination of all the sensory descriptions).

## REPORT

(written to provide an explanation about a topic)

Two important chess pieces every player needs to know are the knight and the bishop. Although both of these pieces are worth three points, they differ in many other ways. Hoping to become a powerful player? Learn the strengths and weaknesses of these two pieces, and your halfway there.

Both pieces should be brought into play early in the game. They should be used to protect advancing pawns, and to keep the opponent's queen at bay. Both the bishop and knight can be used to strike into the enemy line, threatening the rooks or royalty, or preventing the opponent from castling. If the queen or a rook can be won, the knight or bishop can easily be sacrificed without regret.

Each piece, however, does have its particular strengths and limitations. While the knight's ability to move in a unique L shape allows it to attack and fork other pieces, it lacks the long range striking ability of the bishop. The bishop's ability to glide across the entire board on a diagonal makes it a real threat to the enemy, but each bishop is restricted to a single colored square. Your opponent can easily find refuge on the opposite colored square. While the knight can jump other pieces to attack, it lacks the ability to pin other pieces against the king. Pinning, or forcing a piece to stay in position in order to protect its king, is a perfect role for the bishop.

Although both pieces are worth three points in theory, you will begin to learn that one or the other is more valuable to you in actual game play. Remember that in any given scenario you must be flexible enough to use either piece to your advantage, or your opponent will use them to his advantage.

(The topic sentence tells exactly what the report will discuss. In this case it is to compare and contrast. The second paragraph shows comparisons (likenesses), while the third illustrates contrasts (differences). The final paragraph ties the report together, but repeating the basic idea from the first paragraph, while slightly extending it).

## **EDITORIAL**

(written to explain an opinion, but backed up with facts)

The city wants to tear down Williams Park, but we must join together to save it. We need space for our children to play, and we need a place for our neighbors to meet. We also need places of natural beauty as a contrast to the steel and concrete of this city. Isn't it worth saving our park in order to have such a place?

Our young people should not have to play in the street. Williams Park is home to three playgrounds, two soccer fields, a baseball field and two basketball courts. Where will mothers take their preschoolers during the day, and where will children play after school? What alternatives will be there be for the teams that use the sports facilities?

Williams Park has been a gathering place for our community for over two generations. On any day you will find the park filled with college students studying under the trees, seniors playing dominoes and chess at the picnic tables, and couples old and young enjoying a leisurely stroll down the stone paths. Every weekend is filled with family gatherings and barbecues. Just last week the Pet Parade was held in this very park.

Most importantly, we need a place of natural beauty. The gardens of Williams Park have been a source of pride in this community for over fifty years. Two parks have already been eliminated from our city in the past year. If Williams Park is torn down, there won't be two trees standing side by side in the same soil for a square area of forty blocks! Don't our children deserve more trees than the three or four which now so pitifully dot each city block?

Save the park. For our kids, for our community, for the future.

(The introductory paragraph states the problem and the writer's opinion of it. It also tells three specific reasons why the writer holds this opinion. Each reason is then developed in its own paragraph, where it is supported with specific images or facts. The final, short paragraph pounds the point home).