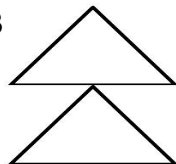


Workshop Four Supplement

Further Examples of Complex Paragraph Triangle Shapes

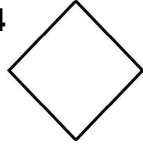
Workshop Four introduced the concept of paragraph *shape*. In particular, it asked you to imagine a paragraph as having a triangle shape, the topic sentence being placed at the point across from the triangle's base. If you study the examples below carefully, you will realise the usefulness of the triangle shape as a writing strategy. The triangle is a strategy that helps you to imagine how to develop information, each shape offering a way to develop and control information. You should develop the habit of drawing the triangle shape in the margin of your text: your brain appreciates visual reminders. In the examples below, the topic sentences are in **bold**.

Triangle Shape 3



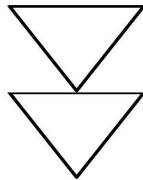
Without any instruction whatsoever, the typical university student becomes a master in the arts of procrastination and self-delusion. No matter how much time he has to complete an essay, he puts off visiting the library until the last possible moment. Or, if he visits the library and borrows several books, he leaves them unopened until there are only a few days left before the deadline, leaving no time to read and absorb the material. Similarly, though he knows that he needs help to improve his essay-writing techniques, he asks his tutor for help the day before the essay deadline. **His ability to procrastinate is nurtured by an equal capacity for self-delusion.** He experiences no fear of the deadline in the firm belief that he can complete all of the required work in a matter of hours. Convinced of his innate genius, he operates on the premise that he thinks more efficiently than other mere mortals. Where others must apply themselves diligently to make any progress whatsoever, he knows in his heart of hearts that his last-minute efforts will prove superior to those pieces of work submitted by mere drudges.

Triangle Shape 4



In the little world of television, all issues and conflicts are solved within its magical thirty minutes. In spite of all of the commercials, the wounded hero either rises or quickly dies, lovers marry or divorce, villains kill or are killed, addicts are cured, justice usually wins, and war ends. All of life's complex problems are solved again this week, as they were the last, and they will be next week. Life on television must be visual. This factor means that issues are single-faceted, revealed in a simple speech, and signalled through the obvious gesture. **No matter how deep the mystery or ambiguous the story-line, the television camera assures us that it all makes sense.**

Triangle Shape 5



Few people realise the degree to which their writing skills influence how their work is assessed. Progress in their career can relate directly to how well they can express themselves on paper. To achieve success, they need to learn how to gain control over their sentence structures and paragraphs. That control will then give them the confidence to meet new challenges and to engage with their work in a way which will reflect their value. **Yet few people ever take the initiative to improve their writing skills by signing up for a practical programme of writing tuition.** Instead, they go on struggling with their writing and feeling anxious about their abilities. Because they never gain the skills necessary to express higher-level concepts intelligibly or to create forceful, eloquent documents, they must work extra hard to prove their usefulness and value in the workplace. **All in all, it seems a terrible waste of time and energy when a little work and application in a writing skills programme is all that is required to rectify the situation.**