

Workshop Seven Supplement

Examples of Paragraphs Using Spatial or Chronological Patterns

Workshops Three and Four provided valuable strategies for improving paragraph coherence at the macro level. Workshop Three stressed the importance of constructing a strong topic sentence to lay the foundation for a successful paragraph. As part of this strategy, it was suggested that you could make the first sentence of a paragraph the topic sentence. Not every paragraph should put a topic sentence as the first sentence because not all information will work well with a topic at the beginning. Therefore, Workshop Four suggested that if we want to put the topic sentence elsewhere, we can imagine that a paragraph has a *shape*, a triangle shape. This shape helps you to visualise where you want the topic sentence to go. In Workshop Seven, another useful coherence strategy was added: the paragraph pattern. There are four common paragraph patterns: the spatial, the chronological, the general to specific, and the specific to general. The paragraph pattern strategy asks you to assess the type of information in the paragraph with the aim of making it follow a “natural” or logical pattern.

Below you will find examples of paragraphs which use either a spatial or a chronological pattern. As you study these examples, you should notice how the writer makes good use of connecting words to show the logical movement in space or time and how the writer includes helpful details to improve the “picture” being constructed of the place, time, or process. Although spatial and chronological information often does not occur at the beginning of the paragraph, once the writer begins to use spatial or chronological information, the pattern works to control the flow of that information. Clearly, if a paragraph is going to use spatial or chronological information, the topic sentence needs to be appropriate to the task.

There are no examples of the general to specific or specific to general paragraph patterns covered in Workshop Seven. Numerous examples of paragraphs which use

these two excellent patterns occur in the handouts from Workshops Four to Nine.

1. Chronological (process):

To make a physiograph, place the camera on the floor with its lens pointing directly upwards and lying immediately below the torch which has been suspended from a hook in the ceiling on a piece of string. Two other strings are hung from hooks several inches to either side of the main string to which they are connected at a point, say, three-quarters of the way down so that they form a V. The strings and the torch should be so arranged that when the torch is given its first swing to set it in motion the movement of the light comes within the area of the negative in the camera. Turn the torch on, turn the room light off, set the torch swinging and open the shutter. Using a fast film, the aperture may be set at about F/11 but the correct stop will have to be discovered experimentally by tests. After several minutes' exposure the track made by the swinging light will have produced a delightful linear pattern on the negative and this can be enlarged in the ordinary way to make a white linear design on a black background.

2. Spatial:

The Abraham Moss Centre is a low, white complex of buildings on the borders of Cheetham and Crumpsall, just to the north of the centre of Manchester. Although the site itself was industrial wasteland, it is in the heart of a residential district. Along one side of it runs a railway, but in every other direction it is surrounded by semi-detached and terraced housing of the interwar years. Both Cheetham and Crumpsall were fairly prosperous Victorian developments, but Cheetham in particular has undergone extensive redevelopment.

3. Spatial:

As the Rift Valley sweeps northwards out of Kenya and into Ethiopia, it forms the spectacular Lake Turkana basin. The long, shallow waters of the lake, which stretches 155 miles north to south and up to 35 miles east to west, sparkle green in the tropical sun: someone called it the Jade Sea, a very apt name. At the south a barrier of small volcanic hills prevents the lake spreading further down into the arid lands of northern Kenya. From the west side rises the Rift Valley wall, a range of mountains with some peaks of more than 5000 feet. This is the land of the Turkana people, a tall, elegant pastoralist tribe. Beyond are the mountains and forests of Uganda. Pouring its silt-laden waters into the north end of the lake is the River Gino, a huge river that drains the Ethiopian Highlands to the north, and meanders tortuously as it nears its end at the border with Kenya where it reaches the Jade Sea. Where the river reaches the lake the sudden barrier to its progress forces it to dump its burden of silt, so creating an enormous delta.