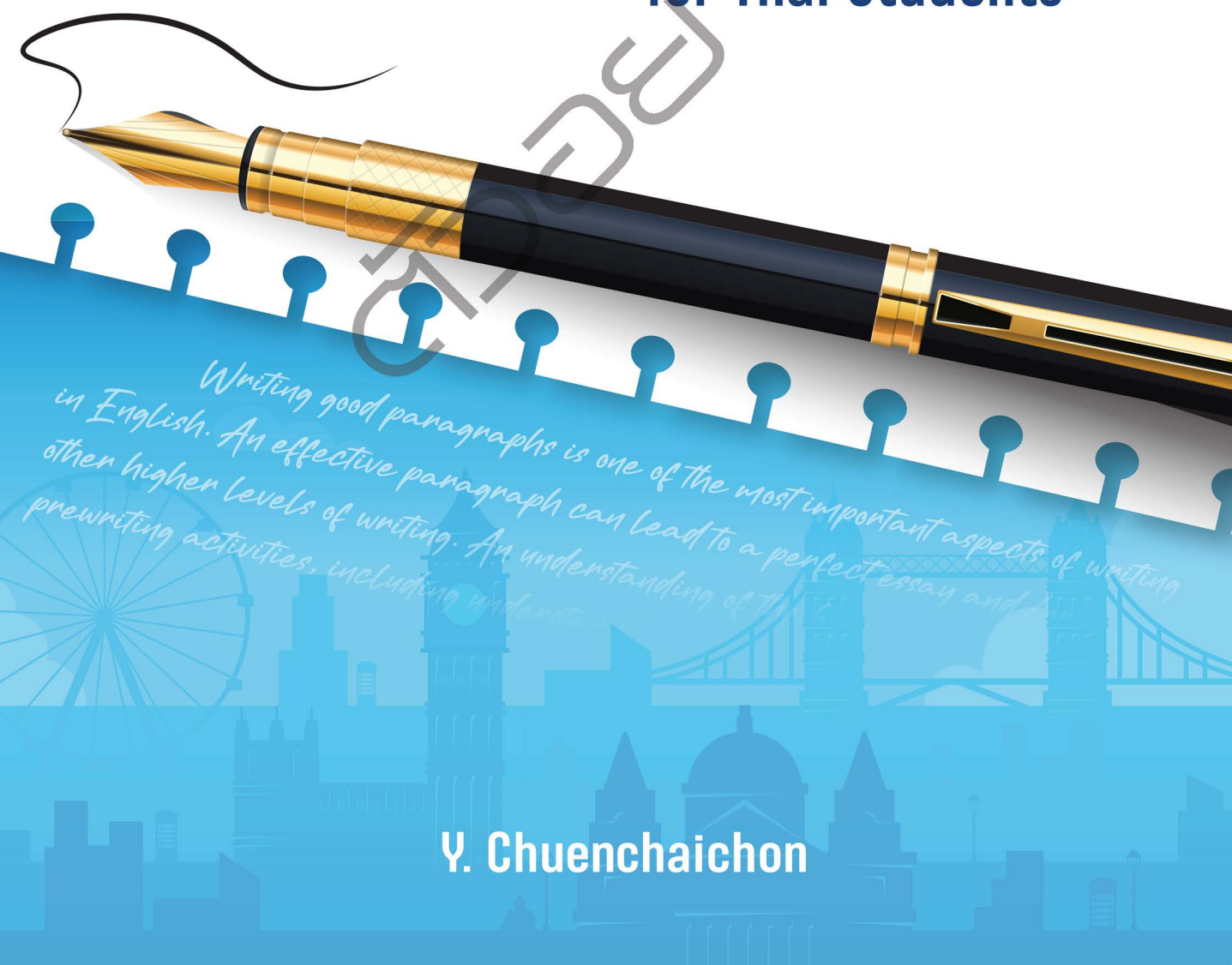




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Paragraph Writing

for Thai Students



Writing good paragraphs is one of the most important aspects of writing in English. An effective paragraph can lead to a perfect essay and other higher levels of writing. An understanding of the prewriting activities, including understanding of the topic, is essential for writing a good paragraph.

Y. Chuenchaichon

Paragraph Writing

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PREFACE

Writing is one of the most important forms of communication in our everyday life. Particularly, writing English is now an important part of university study since it is mainly the place where you can practice writing and prepare yourselves for today world in which English is used as an international language. Learning to write well in English takes practice and patience because you have to be able to write accurate sentences and learn to link words, phrases, and sentences to create your longer texts effectively. In other words, writing effective paragraphs is crucial. When you are able to write good paragraphs, you will be able to perform well in your higher levels of writing, such as essay, report, and research effectively. Thus, becoming fluent writers in English for both sentence and paragraph can help you prepare yourselves for higher education and/or future career.

This textbook is written and used for the paragraph writing course (205122). It is designed for English learners who are between lower and upper intermediate levels. It aims to improve their writing strategies and skills in English from various paragraph types. By the end of the course, students should be able to write different types of paragraphs for a meaningful communication and write sentences containing main clauses as well as subordinate clauses with proper discourse connectors.

The text consists of 8 chapters. Chapter 1 defines what a paragraph is, its main parts, and basic grammar for writing. In Chapter 2, students will learn about pre-writing activities which will help them understand what they are going to do before writing their paragraph. Chapter 3 discusses characteristics of good paragraphs which are unity, coherence, and cohesion. Chapters 4 through 8 focus on writing different types of paragraphs, namely descriptive, narrative, process, reason and result, and compare and contrast paragraphs.

Each chapter in this textbook begins with a discussion about the main content, followed by model paragraphs, writing processes and strategies, and

exercises. From Chapter 4 to Chapter 8, writing practices are included. Students will be asked to write particular topics of each particular paragraph type. The activities in each chapter help students with a particular aspect of paragraph writing, for example, brainstorming, making a paragraph outline, writing good topic, supporting, and concluding sentences, using appropriate transitional words and phrases for each type of paragraphs, varying sentence structures, and correcting common mistakes found when writing sentences.

Appendixes in the back of this textbook provide additional useful materials for paragraph writing. Appendix 1 provides peer feedback form, Appendix 2 shows a rubric for paragraph writing assessment used in this course, and Appendix 3 contains information about comparative adjectives which helps students to improve their writing compare and contrast paragraphs. Additionally, answers to exercises in this textbook are provided.

An important feature of this textbook is the inclusion of a number of sample paragraphs distributed throughout the chapters. In addition, it provides relevant practices, grammar points, and language use necessary and useful for writing learners. For many English learners who are not able to write effectively in English, this textbook deals with different elements that can have positive effects on the quality of a written product. Also, these learners will benefit from step-by-step activities in this textbook.

This textbook is ensured to meet the needs of lower and upper intermediate learners through basic vocabulary development. Explanations and step-by-step activities are clear and appropriate for paragraph writing practice. Comprehensible model paragraphs and four-color design will help learners' visual literacy.

I wish to thank the Department of English, Faculty of Humanities, Naresuan University for supporting me to write this textbook. I also wish to express my appreciation to Associate professor Dr. Watana Padgate and Mr. Richard Glover for their support and encouragement.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO PARAGRAPH WRITING



Learning how to write a paragraph in English is not easy, but there are ways to learn and practice. First of all, it is important to understand what a paragraph is.

WHAT IS A PARAGRAPH?

A **paragraph** is a group of related sentences that discuss one (and usually only one) main idea. A paragraph can be as short as one sentence or as long as ten sentences. The number of sentences is unimportant; however, the paragraph should be long enough to develop the main idea clearly.

(Oshima & Hogue, 2006, p. 2)

A paragraph is a group of about 10-12 sentences about one *topic*. Every sentence in a strong paragraph is about the same topic. All of the sentences explain the writer's *main idea* (most important idea) about that topic. A paragraph can give information, tell an opinion, explain something, or even tell a short story. The sentences are arranged logically, so the reader can easily understand what the writer want to say.

In academic writing, a paragraph has a *topic sentence* that directly tells the reader the main idea. The other sentences in the paragraph, called *supporting sentences*, give more information about the topic. They add specific details and explanations. In academic English, the topic sentence is usually (but not always!) first or last.

(Zemach & Islam, 2011, p. 9)

Most paragraphs follow a certain format. They have three basic parts. A good paragraph usually begins with a sentence that states the main idea of the whole paragraph. This sentence is called the *topic sentence*. The next group of sentences in the paragraph explains the main idea. They add details and give support. These sentences are called *supporting sentences*. Some paragraphs end with a *concluding sentence*. This sentence restates the main idea.

(Blanchard & Root, 2017, p. 11)

In this paragraph writing course, the definition of a paragraph is that it is a group of sentences (150-170 words) related to one particular topic. It consists of 1) a **topic sentence** which tells the main idea to the reader, 2) **supporting sentences** which give the details about that particular topic, and 3) a **concluding sentence** which is the last sentence that summarizes the main idea or restates the topic sentence.

Three main basic parts of a paragraph are shown in an example below.

MY INTERESTING FRIEND

Topic Sentence

Joe is my interesting friend. *He is from China. He can speak Chinese, English, and Thai. He is very talented in computer. Nowadays, he works part-time at a famous computer company.*

Supporting sentences

He can earn a lot of money from this job. Moreover, he can play many kinds of sports. For example, he plays football, basketball, rugby, badminton, and tennis. In short, I admire him and love to

Concluding sentence

learn more about him.

THE TOPIC SENTENCE

The topic sentence is the first sentence in a paragraph and is usually indented. It tells the main idea of the paragraph or what the paragraph is about to the reader. It consists of two parts: **the topic** and **the controlling idea**. Commonly, the topic is the subject of the topic sentence, and the controlling idea is the writer's definite opinion or attitude about a particular topic of the composition. Look at examples of the topic sentence below.

Smoking should be prohibited in public places.

topic controlling idea

Bruno Mars is my favorite singer.

topic controlling idea





PRACTICE 1 : Add a controlling idea to complete each topic sentence.

1. The Internet.....
2. Mobile phones.....
3. Monday
4. My last summer.....
5. Harry Potter.....

PRACTICE 2 : Read the following paragraphs and write your topic sentence that includes a topic and a controlling idea for each paragraph.

1. First, I can use it to search for information for my assignment. I do not need to go to the library to look for books. I can search for more information I need, and I can learn it more quickly. It can help me work better. In addition, I can communicate with my family anytime I want. This really improves my family relationship and communication.
2. She always takes care of me and gives me advice when I need some help. Moreover, she is a kind and friendly person. She loves to meet new people and work with other people. I really love to spend time with her. These are reasons why I love her so much.
3. It is a very beautiful place. I always go there in the summer. There are a lot of tourists visiting it every year. It is a must-see place for tourists to enjoy the beach and spend a night life. Moreover, there are a lot of fun and interesting beach activities that you can do there, for example, swimming in the sea, snorkeling, scuba diving, surfing, and parasailing.

4. I like to play it with my family every weekend. We can spend time together and keep ourselves healthy. Furthermore, this sport is not dangerous. It is a very good exercise, and it helps me a lot when I want to lose some weight.
5. It tastes good and smells fabulous. I love pepperoni pizza the most. My friends and I like to eat it after school. Sometimes, I ask my mom to make it on weekend. She cooks delicious pizza, and she always cooks it on special occasions, for example, celebrating a wedding anniversary, a birthday party, and a family reunion. All in all, I love eating pizza because it makes me happy.

SUPPORTING SENTENCES

Supporting sentences give information to define, describe, explain, compare and contrast ideas, and develop the main idea in the topic sentence. All supporting sentences need to be connected and well-organized.

PRACTICE 3: Write three relevant supporting sentences for the given topic sentences and compare with your classmate.

1. There are several reasons why education should be free.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
2. Time management is a necessary skill for university students.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.



3. My best friend is an interesting person.

- a.
- b.
- c.

4. Phuket is a popular tourist destination.

- a.
- b.
- c.

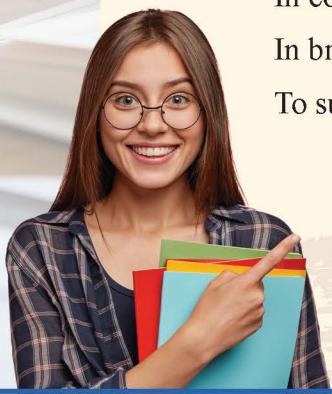
5. Window shopping is a fun activity.

- a.
- b.
- c.

THE CONCLUDING SENTENCE

The concluding sentence is a final sentence of a paragraph. It helps to remind the reader about the topic and the main idea of the paragraph. It also summarizes the main idea or restates the topic sentence, but with different words. When you write a concluding sentence, you should begin the sentence with a concluding signal. Below are concluding signal words that you can use. Importantly, you need to put a comma after these words.

- | | | |
|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| In conclusion, ... | In summary, ... | In short, ... |
| In brief, ... | To conclude, ... | To summarize, ... |
| To sum up, ... | All in all, ... | Last of all, ... |



Look at an example of the topic sentence and the concluding sentence below.

The topic sentence:

Smoking should be prohibited in public places.

The concluding sentence:

To conclude, banning smoking is not only good for smokers themselves, but it is also good for everyone around them.

(see a complete paragraph on page 38)

PRACTICE 4 : Read the following paragraphs and write your concluding sentence for each paragraph.

1. My father is the best man in the world. His name is Ewan Goyer. He loves his family, and he also gives so much love to all family members. He looks after and cares for us. He is very honest, kind, and helpful to other people around him. I am happy when I am with him, and he is the person whom I wish to become when I grow up.

2. Reading is my favorite hobby. I love reading books. There are many kinds of books that I like, for example, magazine, novel, and children's literature. I love to read in my leisure time. Reading books makes me feel happy and relaxed.

3. Cooking Pad Thai is easy if you follow these steps. It is made with rice noodles. When we cook it, we fry eggs and tofu. Then, we put some garlic, dried shrimp, fish sauce, sugar, tamarind pulp, and roasted peanuts. Next, we stir them together. Usually, we add some more vegetables, such as bean sprouts and garlic chives. It may also contain pork, chicken, or shrimp.



4. Exercise can benefit us in many ways. First, it can keep our body fit. Exercise makes our body strong and helps us stay healthy-looking. Second, we can strengthen family relationships. There are many exercises that we can do with our family. For instance, we can go jogging, biking, or camping together. Finally, exercise can help us reduce stress. It can also help us calm, relax, and keep our mind in shape.
.....

5. Being a flight attendant is an interesting career. First of all, you will meet a wide variety of new people. For working as a flight attendant, you have to be patient and have a strong service-minded attitude. This can improve your interpersonal skill. In addition, you can earn a lot of money from this career. It is one of high-paying jobs that many people want to do. Finally, you will have a chance to travel to many interesting places around the world. It is great that you can work and travel at the same time. It can fulfill your dream of traveling around the world.
.....
.....

Apart from understanding the three main basic parts of a paragraph, when writing a paragraph in English, it is important to understand basic grammar for writing, especially at a sentence level.

BASIC GRAMMAR FOR WRITING

To develop your writing ability, the following English grammar is emphasized, namely parts of speech, parts of a sentence, capitalization, and punctuation. Since this English grammar is basic and important for beginning writers, it is essential to use it correctly. In this section, this textbook mainly follows the basic grammar as described in Zemach and Islam (2011).

1. Parts of speech

Parts of speech can help you understand how a word is used in a sentence. In this paragraph writing course, the main focus will be on six parts of speech: noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, and .

1.1 Noun

Noun is a basic part of speech. It can be a person (*e.g., Julie, parent, and student*), a place (*e.g., Bangkok, mountain, and school*), a thing (*e.g., pen, car, and house*), or an idea (*e.g., learning, creativity, and kindness*). In a sentence, it can function as a subject, an object (object of the preposition, direct object, and indirect object), and a subject complement in a sentence.

EXAMPLE

*Julie looks after her two younger **sisters**.*

***Bangkok** is the capital **city** of Thailand.*

***Kindness** is very important among **people**.*

***Jack** is a talented **singer**.*

***Technology** is used for many **purposes**.*

*My **house** was built in 2009.*

*The **table** in my living **room** is made of **wood**.*



Note: A noun phrase consists of a main noun and any dependent words before or after the main noun that describe it.



EXAMPLE

Noun: table

Noun phrase: the table in my living room



1.2 Pronoun

Pronouns (e.g., *he, I, we, they, it, us, and them*) are used to replace nouns that have already mentioned. They can be used in the same way as nouns. Using correct pronouns is very important since it shows the connectivity within a text.

EXAMPLE

*Alan likes Joe and Susan. **He** has known them for 10 years.*

*I bought a new computer for **my** daughter as a birthday gift. I hope she will like it.*

***My friends and I** have part-time jobs after school. **We** think that they can help **us** learn about working with new people.*

1.3 Verb

Verb is an important part of speech and the main part in a sentence. Every complete sentence needs a verb. It can be used to tell about the action of the doer or the state of being of the subject in a sentence. It changes to illustrate the time of the events (e.g., *past, present, and future*) in a sentence. It appears after the subject.

EXAMPLE

Action

*Jeff **swam** every day when he **studied** in high school.*

*Bill and Alex **go** to Chinese restaurant every week.*

*My son **will move** to Bangkok next month.*



Writing good paragraphs is one of the most important aspects of writing in English. An effective paragraph can lead to a perfect essay and/or other higher levels of writing. An understanding of the basic parts of a paragraph, prewriting activities, including understanding the assignment, brainstorming and making a paragraph outline, and characteristics of good paragraphs can improve students' writing skills. In addition, practicing writing various types of paragraphs, such as descriptive paragraphs, narrative paragraphs, and reason and result paragraphs is crucial since it helps learners recognize the differences of each paragraph type and use their writing methods appropriately. As a result, their paragraph writing skills develop which contributes to their higher-level writing abilities.



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