**University of Guelma Written Expression**

**Level: First year**

**Department of English Groups 1.4&5 Teacher: Aiouni L**

**Devoloping a paragraph with opinion and reasons:**

***Opinion Paragraphs : It is a type of persuasive writing.***

In this unit, you will learn how to

* distinguish between fact and opinion.
* organise and write paragraphs expressing opinions and arguments.
* use transition words to express causality.
* use modal expressions to make recommendations.

**Facts and opinions**

A *fact* is a piece of information that is true: *That film was three hours long.*

An *opinion* is an idea or belief about a particular subject: *That film was boring.*

Writers use facts to support their opinions and to show why they hold their beliefs.

***An opinion paragraph***  Read this letter to the editor of a newspaper. Answer the questions.

Dear Editor,

More people should ride bicycles into town. Last year, seventy-three percent of all workers drove their own car to work. Car traffic in town is terrible, parking places are hard to find, and pollution from cars is a real problem. Citizens who want a cleaner, nicer place to live ought to try this non-polluting form of transport. Cycling is good exercise, tool The city must not allow this problem to get worse. Instead, people should ride bicycles to work and school—and enjoy the health benefits of daily exercise.

Bill Adams

Bellingham

1. What is the main idea of this paragraph ? circle the sentence.
2. What is the writer’s purpose ? why did he write this letter ?
3. Underline the sentences or parts of sentences that show an opinion.
4. Why do you think the writer included a fact in this paragraph ?

**b/ Why do people create opinion paragraph ?**

These paragraphs are used to convince people to believe something or to do something.

\*advertisers want you to beleive that you need their product so that you will buy it.

\*politicians want to persuade you to vote for them.

\*people who write letters to the editor may want others to read their ideas, and then join them in changing something about their communities.

**3 Do these types of writing use mostly facts, mostly opinions, or an even mixture of both? Write F for fact, O for opinion, or B for both. Explain your choices to a partner.**

1. film review **e.** news report
2. book report for a university literature class
3. police report of a crime
4. personal e-mail to a friend

**4 Read these sentences. Write F if the sentence is a fact, and O if the sentence is an opinion.**

1. Airfares have become too expensive.
2. English is an easier language to learn  
   than Arabic.
3. Owls are birds that hunt at night.
4. **I** was born in New York City.
5. Exercise is the best way to stay healthy.
6. Internet use has increased every year since  
   its beginning.
7. Engineering is the best career choice.
8. Big cities are dangerous at night.

**6 Writing a Supported Opinion Paragraph :**

Example : What is your favourite 1 television show ? Explain3 Why.

Comment (1) : This word explains that the answer must focus on one show that you ENJOY.

Comment (2) :This word indicates that you are only to talk about ONE show rather than compare your favourite to others.

Comment (3) This is the phrase that asks you to provide details to support your answer. As a suggested rule, choose three reasons.

-when writing a Supported Opinion Paragraph, the keys to success are as follows :

1. Make sure that you understand the question that is being asked, and what you have to provide in your answer.

2. Make sure that you jot down your opinion and your support in the Rough Notes section on the paper to organize this information before you start writing.

3.Make sure that you follow the Suggested Opinion Paragraph when writing your answer.

4. Make sure that you edit your paragraph, so that there are no errors that prevent your reader from understanding what you are saying. Use an internal checklist to do so like this one.

**Example Answer :**

My favourite TV show is CSL show. I like CSL because it creates a lot of suspense. You are always wondering what will happen next. CSL is also good because it makes you think and it is also educational. It teaches you a lot about forensic science. CSL is also my favourite TV show because it is creative. Every week they come up with another strange and unheard method of murder. CSL is my favourite TV show because it is so well-done.

**Sentence #1 Introductory Sentence\_** This sentence contains part of the question ( e.g. « My favourite TV show is ») and answers the question (e.g.  « CSL ») being asked. **A topic sentence which states your opinion.**

**Sentence** #2 Sentence Support: this sentence contains the first support for the opinion given in the introductory sentence ( “…because it creates a lot of suspense”)

**Sentence** #3 sentence of Clarification\_ this sentence provides clarification by explaining the first support given ( e.g. how is CSL suspenseful? “you are always wondering what will happen next”)

**Sentence** #4 sentence of support\_ this sentence contains the second support for the opinion given in the introductory sentence (e.g …because it is educational”)

**Sentence #5** sentence of clarification\_ this sentence provides clarification by explaining the second support given( e.g. How is CSL educational?” It teaches you a lot about forensic science”

**Sentence #6 sentence of support:** Thissentence contains the third support for the opinion given in the introductory sentence( e.g. “..because it is creative”)

**Sentence#7** sentence of clarification\_ this sentence provides clarification by explaining the third support given( e.g. How is CSL creative? “Every week they come up with another strange and unheard -of method of murder.”

**At least 3 sentences with supporting details and explanations that back up your main reason.**

**Sentence #8 Concluding sentence:** This sentence ends the paragraph by summing up the details within the rest of the paragraph, and may even create unity by repeating a phrase from the introductory sentence( e.g. CSL is well done”, which is a description that describes all of the other details in the paragraph.)

**A concluding sentence that restates your opinion using different wording, and summarizes the main ideas in the supporting sentences**.

1. General pattern of an opinion paragraph organization

Opinion paragraphs usually follow this pattern :

1. Statement of opinion
2. Evidence : A reason why the opinion is correct. Usually includes one or more of the following :

\*facts or statistics

\*Events

\*Anecdotes( references to personal experience)

\*Statements from experts.

1. Concluding comment :A restatement of the opinion and (sometimes) a recommendation for action.

**Paragraph Outline**

**Topic Sentence** (state your **opinion** related to the topic

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ***First of all***… + **main reason** + **1st supporting detail with explanation**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ***Second***…+ **main reason** + **2nd supporting detail with explanation**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ***Third***…+ **main reason** + **3rd supporting detail with explanation**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**Concluding sentence** (restate your topic sentence in a different way and summarize supporting details.(*In conclusion…)*

Exercises :

1. Read the following paragraph, and label its parts : topic Sentence, evidence, concluding statement or recommendations.

Teenagers today are lazy, dishonest and uninterested in anything that involves hard work or personal sacrifice. For example, a recent study in Great Britain found that teens today are more obese, drink more alcohol and do more drugs than any generation before. Diabetes in adolescents, and other illnesses related to lack of physical fitness, are much more common today than ever before. In addition, today’s teens are less honest, as 65 of Canadian teenagers do not believe that downloading music illegally from the internet was wrong. Finally, most teens today would rather be given an allowance by their parents so they can spend the weekend in front of the X-Box, rather than use some of their free time actually earning their own money at a job. In conclusion, I think that most teenagers do not appreciate the comfortable lives they live\_and I think their parents should force them off the couch, and out into the workplace to find out what real life is like !

***Modal auxiliaries***

Using modal auxiliaries

When you speak, you introduce opinions with phrases like *I think, In mv opinion,* and *I believe.* In general, these introductory phrases are not needed in writing. They can even make you sound less sure of your ideas. Instead, writers use grammatical methods such as modal auxiliary verbs and transition words to express their opinions. Modal auxiliary verbs show the strength of a writer's opinion or argument.

Affirmative :

The city could add more cycle paths weakest

Should

Ought to

Has to/ must strongest

Negatives : The city does not have allow more cars weakest

Shouldn’t

Can’t/ must not strongest

Look again at the paragraph in exercise 1. Circle the modal auxilaries. How strong do you think the writer's opinions were? Discuss with a partner

**Connectors of cause and effect**

**How to use connectors of cause and effect for expressing opinions**

*Because, since,* and *so* are connectors of cause and effect. They join two ideas when one idea causes or explains the other. *Because* and *since* introduce the cause or reason, and *so* and *therefore* introduce the effect or result:

cause / **reason effect / result**

*petrol is becoming scarce and expensive we should develop electric cars*

For example:

**Because** *petrol is becoming scarce and expensive, we should develop electric cars. We should develop electric cars* **since** *petrol is becoming scarce and expensive. Petrol is becoming scarce and expensive, so we should develop electric cars.*

*Therefore* is slightly different. It joins the ideas in two sentences:

*Petrol is becoming scarce and expensive.* **Therefore,** *we should develop electric cars.*

**Punctuation note**

* When *because* or *since* begin a sentence, use a comma after the first part of the sentence (the cause).
* When the effect or result comes first, don't use a comma before *because* and *since.*
* A result or effect beginning with *so* is usually the second part of a sentence. Use a comma before *so.*
* Use *Therefore* after a full stop.
* Use a comma after *Therefore.*

***Developing a Paragraph with reasons***

The previous lessons have emphasized how a paragraph must have unity. It is not always so easy, however, to achieve that unity. Fortunately, there are a couple of practical methods that can help. In this lesson, we look at one of these methods, the use of reasons, as a way to develop paragraphs. For example, you have just written this topic sentence:

One improvement that our community needs is better bus service.

You are trying to develop this topic sentence into a paragraph, but you cannot write another word. You sit and stare at your paper or computer screen.

Has this ever happened to you? If so, it will be less likely to happen again—once you have learned the method of **giving reasons.**

The following paragraph shows how to develop a topic sentence by giving reasons.

**Model Paragraph**

1One improvement that our community needs is better bus service. 2At present, all we have are four old buses running between the railroad station and the community park. 3These buses are very crowded, and they are rarely on time. 4After 8 P.M. there is no bus service at all, even though a number of shops and the library are open until 9. 5Recently, because gasoline costs have remained high, more people have been riding the buses, and the overcrowding is worse than ever. 6The aging buses are being strained to the limit. 7Breakdowns are becoming more frequent. 8Unless new buses are put into service soon, we are going to have a real transportation crisis in this town.

**Comments on the Model Paragraph**

**S1 (the topic sentence)** states: *One improvement that our community needs is better bus service.*

**S2–S7 (the body of the paragraph)** support this statement with *reasons:*

old buses (S2)

crowding and lateness (S3)

lack of service after 8 P.M. (S4)

recent increases in ridership and overcrowding (S5)

overtaxing of the buses (S6)

breakdowns (S7)

S8 (the clincher sentence) sums up the paragraph and restates the idea of the topic sentence with greater emphasis.

**Arranging the Reasons :**

**Hints for Arranging Reasons**

1. Begin with a strong reason, but not your strongest. Example:

**At present, all we have are four old buses . . .**

2. End the paragraph with your strongest reason, or put it just before the concluding sentence if there is one. Example:

**Breakdowns are becoming more frequent.**

The following paragraph is the same as the one you have just read, except that some of

the reasons appear in a different order.

***Question:*** Is the following paragraph better than the one we have just read? Why?

1One improvement that our community needs is better bus service. **2**At present, all we have are four old buses running between the railroad station and the community park. **3**These buses are very crowded, and they are rarely on time. **4** Recently, because of the high cost of gasoline, more people have been riding the buses, and the overcrowding is worse than ever. **5**The aging buses are being strained to the limit. **6** Breakdowns are becoming more frequent. 7After 8 P.M. there is no bus service at all, even though a number of shops and the library are open until 9. **8**Unless new buses are put into service soon, we are going to have a real transportation crisis in this town.

***Answer:*** The above paragraph is not as good as the first one because it presents its reasons in the following order:

old buses (S2)

crowding and lateness (S3)

recent increases in ridership and overcrowding (S4)

overtaxing of the buses (S5)

breakdowns (S6)

lack of service after 8 P.M. (S7)

This is not the most effective order.

The most compelling reasons are the *recent increases in ridership,*

*overtaxing of the buses, and, most important of all, breakdowns.* In

the original paragraph these reasons are given *just before the clincher*

*sentence.*

But what do we find in the important position just before the clincher sentence in the second version of the paragraph? We find a much weaker reason—*lack of service after 8 P.M.*

**EXERCISE 1.** Each of the following topic sentences can be developed into a paragraph

with ***reasons.*** Three reasons are given. Which should you mention first? Last?

Put an **F** in the space before your first reason and an **L** before your last. Be prepared to

defend your answers.

***Sample:***

TOPIC SENTENCE: **Our mayor deserves to be reelected.**

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 1. He has speeded up street repairs.

\_\_\_\_ 2. He has helped the city achieve the highest level of employment in the

state.

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. He has eliminated wasteful spending and government inefficiency.

1. TOPIC SENTENCE: **TV news programs are worth watching.**

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 1. You can see and hear the people in the news.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2. You get weather reports.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3. You get up-to-the-minute news.

2. TOPIC SENTENCE: **Benjamin Franklin was a remarkable person.**

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 1. He invented the lightning rod.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2. He persuaded France to come to our aid, enabling us to win our independence.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3. He was the finest American writer of his time, as well as a practical scientist.

3. TOPIC SENTENCE: **The fire at Ace Supermarket has hurt the people of our neighborhood.**

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Since Ace burned down, shoppers have been paying more elsewhere but

not getting the same quality.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Ace used to offer the best merchandise at the lowest prices.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Ace’s dairy and meat products were of the highest quality.

5. TOPIC SENTENCE: **The disadvantages of motor vehicles are serious.**

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 1. They are a major cause of air pollution, endangering the nation’s health.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2. They destroy billions of dollars of property annually.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3. They kill thousands of people (43,000 in 2002) a year on our roads and

highways.

**Opinion Paragraph writing Ex 2 :** Write a paragraph about the following opinion  « Smoking must be banned in all restaurants and schools ».Brainstorm ideas, narrow down your topic, and then write. Remember to use auxiliaries.