

Grade 8 English Home Language Worksheet

Paragraph writing: consider only one main idea

ACTIVITY 1

Write a paragraph of 80 - 100 words on any topic of your choice. You must make sure that:

1. Your paragraph is of the right length.
2. There is one main idea for the paragraph (unity of paragraph content).
3. The topic sentence comes at the beginning of the paragraph and all the sentences are linked to the topic sentence.

Your paragraph will be assessed against the following checklist:

Checklist for writing a paragraph

	✓	✗
One idea for the whole paragraph.		
Topic sentence first.		
All the other sentences linked to it.		
No deviation from the topic.		
Paragraph is the right length.		

ACTIVITY 2

Choose an issue that you have a strong opinion about.

Write a paragraph of 80 - 100 words in which you argue ONE point. In your paragraph, you must include each of the following words/phrases at least ONCE:

- however
- therefore
- on the other hand

Underline the word/phrase as you use it.

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Your paragraph will be assessed against the following checklist:

Checklist for writing a paragraph

	✓	✗
One idea for the whole paragraph.		
Topic sentence first/in the middle/last.		
All the other sentences linked to it.		
No deviation from the topic.		
Paragraph is the right length.		
Each word/phrase used at least once.		

ACTIVITY 3

Read the following paragraphs which are not in the right order. Put the paragraphs into a logical order so that the meaning develops from one paragraph to the next. Simply write the number of the paragraph in the correct order.

The essay is adapted from: <http://www.thewritesource.com/studentmodels/ws2k-lesson.htm>

A Lesson to Learn

1	Before I answer one of his questions, I usually tell him that he's pretty stupid and asks too many questions. This is unkind, I know. I shouldn't do it.
2	To make things worse, my brother squawked all day about how I was so stupid for not asking questions! I just sighed and told him he was right — I wouldn't make fun of him anymore for asking so many questions.
3	My little brother is so irritating. All day long he says, "Eddie, I wonder why people can talk but animals can't." Or, "I wonder why the ocean looks blue." Of course, I don't know the answers, but I don't let him know that. I just make up reasonable explanations, and he accepts them as if I were the smartest person in the world.
4	I learned a lesson from my little brother: Never be afraid to ask questions, and NEVER be afraid to wonder why.
5	Yesterday we both got our report cards. I got B's and C's, and he got straight A's. Under the "Comments" section on my report card, it said, "Eddie would be getting better grades if he asked more questions." Of course, on my brother's report card, it said just the opposite.

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Suggested Solutions

ACTIVITY 1

Sample paragraph

The children were playing in the park. Some had climbed up the slide and were whizzing down, screaming with enjoyment. A few were on the junglegym, balancing and whirling, chatting to their friends and then suddenly slithering to the ground. Quite a few had gathered at the horse. One larger boy was yanking the head up and down; the rest were trying to get on while the seats bucked and swayed. The children at the swings sat quietly, waiting for older brothers or sisters to push them, although there were some who wanted something more exciting and were begging the pusher to be more vigorous.

Checklist for writing a paragraph

	✓	✗
One idea for the whole paragraph.	✓	
Topic sentence first.	✓	
All the other sentences linked to it.	✓	
No deviation from the topic.	✓	
Paragraph is the right length.	✓	

ACTIVITY 2

Learners in Grade 8 should have homework but it should not take up all of their time. Firstly, homework can take up far too much time in the afternoons; therefore, learners reduce the amount of time they spend at extramurals. However, extramurals build team spirit and enable the learners to shine at what they are good at and to enjoy something outside the academic curriculum. On the other hand, no homework is also bad because learners need to learn discipline and how to study and revise. Therefore, some homework is necessary.

Checklist for writing a paragraph

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One idea for the whole paragraph.	✓	
Topic sentence first/in the middle/last.	✓	
All the other sentences linked to it.	✓	
No deviation from the topic.	✓	

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Paragraph is the right length.	✓	
Each word/phrase used at least once.	✓	

ACTIVITY 3

The paragraphs should be in the following order:

3 1 5 2 4

My little brother is so irritating. All day long he says, “Eddie, I wonder why people can talk but animals can’t.” Or, “I wonder why the ocean looks blue.” Of course, I don’t know the answers, but I don’t let him know that. I just make up reasonable explanations, and he accepts them as if I were the smartest person in the world.

Before I answer one of his questions, I usually tell him that he’s pretty stupid and asks too many questions. This is unkind, I know. I shouldn’t do it.

Yesterday we both got our report cards. I got B’s and C’s, and he got straight A’s. Under the “Comments” section on my report card, it said, “Eddie would be getting better grades if he asked more questions.” Of course, on my brother’s report card, it said just the opposite. To make things worse, my brother squawked all day about how I was so stupid for not asking questions! I just sighed and told him he was right — I wouldn’t make fun of him anymore for asking so many questions.

I learned a lesson from my little brother: Never be afraid to ask questions, and NEVER be afraid to wonder why.

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