Online Chapter 3
Writing Paragraphs

Paragraphs put readers (and writers) on notice that something new is at hand. Greek and Roman manuscripts sometimes contain an underlining (paragraphos) to signal this change of direction. Medieval manuscripts use the character we call a pilcrow (¶). Modern indented paragraphs date to the seventeenth century and seem to be giving way to unindented block paragraphs divided by white spaces. But however they’re signaled, paragraphs should have a recognizable identity and some degree of difference from the text around them. As a practical matter, they give readers a resting place between bite-sized steps in an essay and help writers themselves bundle and control their thoughts.

Chapter 15 has already mentioned how you can use opening paragraphs to set the tone and direction for an essay, along with transitional paragraphs to ease readers over sharp breaks in your line of thought. Here we’ll be concerned with the rest of the piece, particularly the middle paragraphs where you present the bulk of what you have to say. You’ll say it better if those paragraphs are well connected and solidly developed.

A Word about Transitions

Though this chapter talks mostly about paragraphs in isolation, in the real world paragraphs rarely appear alone. They usually form part of a longer piece and need to be clearly connected to what came before. Sometimes the connection is so obvious no one could miss it. More often some sort of transition has to be built into each new paragraph from the start.

To begin at the beginning, the first sentence of a typical paragraph generally announces its own particular topic and at the same time provides that link to the rest of the piece. The sentence
you just read, for instance, uses the word *beginning* as a bridge back to the “from the start” in the paragraph before it while the term *link* recalls the talk there about connections. Repeating a key term or idea is a tried and true way to bind your paragraphs together, rather like the patterns of old and new information that make for sentence cohesion in Chapter 9. Other devices include transitions like *furthermore, in particular, in the same way,* or *however.* There are hundreds to choose from.

To extend the idea, here are opening lines from a cluster of paragraphs on the dangers of common household products. All of them contain transitions of one kind or another. The writer starts with candles, which produce potentially harmful soot whether they’re made of natural waxes or paraffin. The paragraphs that follow start with these sentences:

- But paraffin wax comes with its own problems.
- While the candle industry insists that the final product is inert, studies have shown that the burning of paraffin candles releases benzene and toluene.
- To add to all this, artificial dyes and synthetic fragrances are often added to candles.
- If you can’t live without your candles, consider those made of beeswax or vegetable oils.
- While most candles have all cotton wicks, a small percentage still have metal wire cores.

Cliff Weathers, “5 Popular Home Products That Can Be Surprisingly Toxic”

The *but* at the head of the first of these sentences announces a turn. All candles give off soot, *but* Weathers wants to focus on those made of paraffin. “While the candle industry . . .” seems to make a concession to the trade, but the paragraph it introduces will clearly go on to decry benzene and toluene. “To add to all this” widens the condemnation to dyes and fragrances. “If you can’t live without your candles,” leads to a discussion of safer alternatives to paraffin. Finally “While most candles have all cotton wicks” signals another change. Wicks can be a
You’ve been writing about public subsidies for private real estate developments like New York City’s High Line Park. Now you want to turn to Baltimore, where the city is offering about a hundred million dollars to developers to build housing and office space on a largely derelict site called Westport Waterfront. Write a transition sentence to lead off the Baltimore paragraph.

2) This time the topic is password managers that generate, store, and apply secure passwords to online sites you visit. You’ve been discussing the advantages of using them, but now you want to mention some disadvantages as well. The chief one, as you see it, is that these secure passwords will be in the hands of the software company you use. What if it goes belly-up? Write a transition sentence to start the disadvantages paragraph.

3) Reread something you’ve written and highlight the transitions between your paragraphs. Consider these through the eyes of your imaginary reader. Do they clearly show the connections between your ideas?

**Paragraph Purposes**

The middle or body paragraphs of an essay are usually meant to introduce, explain, illustrate, prove, or restate a point. It helps to think in these terms (with your imaginary reader looking over your shoulder) both as you write them and later as you weigh their effectiveness. This paragraph, for instance, works as the introduction to a **paragraph cluster** on the purposes paragraphs serve. It announces the general topic and the subtopics the cluster will discuss. Now that you’ve read it, you should have no doubt where the next few paragraphs are headed.
Explanatory paragraphs clarify some central idea. They may concern processes like how to paint acrylics or situations like the ascension of Pope Francis. They may end up proving or seeming to prove a point, but that isn’t their chief function, which is simply to make things clear.

Suppose you were writing on the merits of casinos. They are often touted for the economic benefits they offer—jobs and tax revenues. But each of these benefits is open to question. Casino jobs are generally not high paying and tax revenues may be offset by incentives and infrastructure costs. Some local businesses may benefit by the patrons casinos bring to town, but others will suffer as the casino drains off their trade. All these details may seem to add up in favor of or against casinos, but that’s incidental in an explanatory paragraph. It sets out to provide food for thought, not to digest it for you.

Illustration most often means stating a point and giving a number of typical examples. This works best for subjects that aren’t highly controversial. Imagine a paragraph on how important special effects have become in movies. You might cite one or two specific cases or perhaps a series like the Lord of the Rings films. Again, your aim would not be to prove that special effects are especially important nowadays, but just to make sure your readers knew what you meant.

Argumentative paragraphs set out prove things, or try. Online Chapter 2 discusses Stephen Toulmin’s way of analyzing arguments in terms of claims, grounds, and warrants, and these are the elements that go into argumentative paragraphs. When you add backing, qualifications, objections, and rebuttals, they can become dense and informative, but their chief aim is to persuade. Imagine a paragraph in favor of land-farmed salmon. The latest technology uses recirculating fresh water in giant tanks to raise the salmon away from the open inlets other operations pollute. The fish are healthy and taste good (There might be a quote from a seafood chef on this point). They can be raised hundreds of miles inland. The water they live in can be
filtered and monitored as it recirculates. Of course the startup costs are high, but the process has been shown to be economically feasible, . . . and so on. This would be a typical argumentative paragraph. It doesn’t just describe land-farming salmon but actively promotes it.

Restatement paragraphs are useful for conclusions to paragraph clusters and essays, often starting out with transitions like “And so we see . . .” or “In other words. . . .” Like introductions, these tend to be short. Their function is to put what you’ve been saying in a nutshell so readers won’t miss your point. “What all this means, then,” you might say, “is that new technologies like seawater greenhouses, harvesting algae, green super rice, and land-farmed salmon are capable of transforming food supplies and supporting the world’s growing population.”

Why bother thinking about your paragraphs in such terms? Like everything else about writing, the more clearly you know what you set out to do, the better you can tell how well you’ve done it. At the end of an introductory paragraph you want your imaginary reader to say, “I see exactly where you’re going with this.” At the end of an explanatory or illustration paragraph he or she should exclaim, “Ah, I understand it now.” Finishing an argumentative paragraph a reader should admit, “By heavens, that’s right!” or, more likely, “Well, it’s at least possible.” And restatement paragraphs should make readers think, “That sums it up. Wonder what comes next.”

Exercise 2

1. Write the introduction to a paragraph cluster on the “Bevin Boys,” British World War II conscripts who were selected to work in the coal mines rather than fight. The cluster will include paragraphs on how the program came about, how the boys were treated in the mines (it was dangerous and dirty work), and how their efforts were finally recognized by the British government, but not until 2008.
2. Write an explanatory paragraph on how to iron a shirt properly. Google it if you need to. Include a transition in the first sentence to link to the previous paragraph, which was about how to load a dishwasher, part of a cluster on household chores that are often done badly.

3. Write a restatement paragraph to conclude the household chores cluster. You’ve talked about how to water houseplants, how to clean a refrigerator, how to load a dishwasher, and how to iron a shirt.

**Paragraph Construction**

*Set-pattern paragraphs*

Like whole essays, paragraphs can follow fairly predictable patterns or be more open ended in structure. Familiar patterns include development by examples (an assertion backed up by illustrative details); spatially organized descriptions; comparisons arranged point-by-point or in blocks; cause and effect (or effect and cause) paragraphs; problems followed by solutions, and chronologically organized processes and narratives. The advice in Online Chapter 2 about arranging a whole essay according to one of these patterns applies to paragraphs as well; for example, comparison paragraphs should give each subject equal consideration and cover the same ground in each part of the comparison, generally in the same order. If you find yourself writing such a paragraph, it pays to be aware of it and make sure you satisfy readers’ expectations.

Notice that identifying a paragraph according to one of these familiar types also gives you a welcome boost when it comes to developing and evaluating it. A top-to-bottom or nearby-to-far away description? Go back over it in your mind, and you’re almost certain to discover new details. An example paragraph? Make a summary list of your examples on another sheet or
window, and you’re equally likely to come up with more, and perhaps some better ones. If on reflection, your paragraph looks a little thin (more on that later), these new ideas might be just what you need to beef it up. In the same way, when you are revising a cause and effect paragraph, say, really focus on that relationship. As usual, your imaginary reader can help. Was the fifty percent fall in stay-at-home moms from 1970 to 2000 entirely due to economics? Ask Selena Gomez. She may think other factors like immigration and ethnicity were involved as well.

Set-pattern paragraphs can be remarkably effective, partly because they are familiar. Readers know where they are—no guesswork needed—and can attend to the details, allowing them full weight. Here, for example, is a descriptive paragraph from an article on social and economic divisions in San Francisco:

On my first day, walking past a pop-up futurist conference called Quantum Leap, I am obliged to step around several homeless men sleeping in the baking sun. A few yards away, in the line for artisanal coffee whose $20 price tag is apparently justified by a special brewing method, young entrepreneurs discuss their starting salaries while an elderly woman dressed in grimy plastic bags yells, “How dare you?” at nobody in particular.

Laurie Penny, “A Tale of Two Cities: How San Francisco's Tech Boom is Widening the Gap Between Rich and Poor”

The paragraph unfolds along a short segment of Penny’s walk, leaving us free to give all our attention to the sleeping homeless men and the crazy old woman bracketing those oblivious yuppies, a picture that sums up the author’s theme.
And here is a pocket-size narrative that gives special bite to what could have been a dry commentary on the abilities of computer algorithms. Charles Duhigg is a New York Times writer who was perhaps over-impressed with them:

Duhigg’s killer anecdote was of the man who stormed into a Target near Minneapolis and complained to the manager that the company was sending coupons for baby clothes and maternity wear to his teenage daughter. The manager apologized profusely and later called to apologize again—only to be told that the teenager was indeed pregnant. Her father hadn’t realized. Target, after analyzing her purchases of unscented wipes and magnesium supplements, had.

Tim Harford, “Big data: are we making a big mistake?”

Harford goes on to explain that Target’s seemingly miraculous “hit” was probably a statistical anomaly—send out enough maternity ads and you’re bound to hit some pregnant customers—but his point about the limits of computer analysis would have been much less memorable without the Minneapolis story.

EXERCISE 3

1) Write a paragraph laying out the steps in some process you know—how to wash a cat, say, or how to prepare a wall for painting. Announce the topic, explain what materials are needed, and then describe the process one step at a time in the proper order.

2) Officials say that current federal rules concerning school lunches have caused tremendous waste. Google “federal school lunch waste” and write a cause and effect paragraph on the topic. What specific regulations are at fault? What kind of waste do they cause and how much? Mention the cause first and then go on to talk about the waste involved. Be careful not to get sidetracked into discussing possible solutions.
3) Write a comparison paragraph on major similarities and differences between two related things, love and infatuation, perhaps, or PlayStations and Xboxes. Choose either the point-by-point or block methods of organization, but be sure to balance one side of the comparison against the other.

Open ended paragraphs

Open ended paragraphs are less predictable than set-patterned ones, but should be just as tightly organized and controlled. They commonly begin with a topic sentence marking out the territory they will cover and possibly stating the main idea they will support. For instance, in the series of paragraphs on candle hazards above, the first talked about the general threats posed by paraffin candles, the second zeroed in on noxious gasses from paraffin candles, the third went after the dyes and fragrances in any sort of candles, the fourth discussed healthier alternatives, and the fifth turned to a new danger—lead wicks. Weathers, the author, was careful to announce each topic at the head of its paragraph.

What comes after the topic sentence? Here’s a paragraph from an essay about the ethics of raising animals to be killed for food:

Bob Comis of Stony Brook Farm is a professional pig farmer—the good kind. Comis knows his pigs, loves his pigs, and treats his pigs with uncommon dignity. His animals live in an impossibly bucolic setting and “as close to natural as possible.” They are, he writes, so piggy that they are Plato’s pig, “the ideal form of the pig.” Comis’s pastures, in Schoharie, New York, are playgrounds of porcine fun: “they root, they lounge, they narf, they eat, they forage, they sleep, they wallow, they bask, they run, they play.” And when the fateful day of deliverance arrives, “they die unconsciously, without pain or suffering.”

James McWilliams, “Loving Animals To Death”
There are several ways you might analyze what’s going on here, but two are particularly useful because they are equally good for evaluating paragraphs you’ve written yourself. One you already know. Just plug in the “What’s that?” “How so?” “For instance?” “How do you know?” “Why?” or “So what?” test from Online Chapter 2. What does McWilliams mean when he says Bob Comis is the good kind of pig farmer? Why, that Comis knows his pigs. How does he treat them with uncommon dignity? He keeps them in a state “as close to natural as possible.” How do we know that? We have his own say-so. (En garde! There may be a bit of a problem here.) And so on. You ought to be able to stepping-stone your way through the paragraph asking and answering the six questions. This process is good, too, at uncovering logical gaps. Can we trust what Comis wrote himself about his farm? Probably so, but it might be wise to bring in some other evidence as well.

The other plan, Francis Christensen’s method of analyzing paragraph organization, pares down the relationships between sentences to just two—parallel or subordinate. After a sentence to announce the topic, every other sentence should be of equal importance to one that went before (be parallel) or should support one that went before (be subordinate). Here’s the way Christensen might view the Bob Comis paragraph.

1. Bob Comis of Stony Brook Farm is a professional pig farmer—the good kind.

2. Comis knows his pigs, loves his pigs, and treats his pigs with uncommon dignity.

3. His animals live in an impossibly bucolic setting and “as close to natural as possible.”

3. They are, he writes, so piggy that they are Plato’s pig, “the ideal form of the pig.”

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2. Comis’s pastures, in Schoharie, New York, are playgrounds of porcine fun: “they root, they lounge, they narf, they eat, they forage, they sleep, they wallow, they bask, they run, they play.”

2. And when the fateful day of deliverance arrives, “they die unconsciously, without pain or suffering.”

This kind of graphic layout is easy to arrange using a word processor. Comis is a good pig farmer because he loves his pigs, he lets them run, and he kills them humanely. Those three ideas, all number 2’s, are parallel. We know he loves his pigs for two other parallel reasons (number 3’s): because he lets them live as close to natural lives as he can, and because he says so himself. Cristensen’s analysis allows you to see the structure of the whole paragraph at a glance, and it’s particularly good at generating new ideas. For instance, once you see you have two examples of why Comis is a good pig farmer, you might think of more. Perhaps he names his pigs? And how about providing some 3’s under that number 2 about dying “without pain or suffering?” Just how does Comis manage that?

Now let’s look at a paragraph that goes haywire. The ideas that derail paragraphs are usually related to the topic—the subject of the paragraph—but not to the writer’s purpose—what he or she set out to say about it. Here’s an example:

No one knows whether talent is an inbred or an acquired trait, but your opinion on the matter is likely to influence your performance. If you think you either have a talent or you don’t, you’re likely to give up the first time you fail or not try something in the first place. This is a pity. People whose lives could have been enriched by playing music or doing art, for example, never even try because they’re convinced they’d only fail. They’re cutting themselves off from fulfilling experiences without realizing it.
Apply Christensen’s analysis here, and you quickly uncover the problem. The first sentence announces not only the topic—talent—but the point about it the writer wants to make: if you think talent is inbred, you’re likely to act one way; if you think it can be acquired, you probably behave differently. Sentence two supports the inbred part of the theme by defining the outcome on that side: if talent is beyond your control, you may avoid trying something altogether or give up easily when you don’t immediately succeed. But the third sentence—“This is a pity”—lurches off in a whole new direction. Suddenly we’re no longer talking about how you’ll behave, but whether that behavior is good or bad. And once this camel gets its nose in the tent, it’s hard to keep the rest of it out. Sure enough, from this point on the paragraph tails off in laments for the stunted lives of unadventurous people. The second half of the original proposition—how you behave if you think talent can be acquired—never gets covered at all.

Exercise 3

1) Write a paragraph to follow this sentence: “Social media have had a major impact on the writing styles.” Google the topic for details. Work your way forward by asking “What’s that?” “How so?” “For instance?” “How do you know?” “Why?” or “So what?” about each sentence. At the end of each sentence put the question it answers in parentheses; for example, “Social media include such forms of electronic communication as blogs, wikis, and Facebook-like programs that allow users to post and comment on information or images. (What’s that?)”

2) Make a Christensen diagram of this paragraph following the model above:

There are variations in odor perception between human adult males and females. Le Magnen and Doty found that this is most evident in the case of women's ability to smell musks, which are chemically similar to the male sex hormone testosterone. Whereas women are very sensitive to civetone (from the anal glands of the civet cat and used in
many perfumes), and boar taint substance (a sexual attractant produced in the genital glands of the boar), men are not. Moreover, women's sensitivity varies with their menstrual cycles: during menstruation, they are no more sensitive to musks than men, but about ten days after menstruation (a woman's peak fertility period), they reach their maximum sensitivity. In addition, women on the pill, women who have had ovarectomies, pregnant women, and post-menopausal women are relatively insensitive to these substances. Le Magnen deduced that sensitivity to musk is dependent on the levels of estrogen in the blood.

Based on David Wolfgang-Kimbal, “Pheromones in Humans: Myth or Reality?”

3) Make a Christensen diagram of a body paragraph from your own writing. Choose a well-developed paragraph of five sentences or more.

**Paragraph Development**

At least three topics fit under “paragraph development”: cohesion, arrangement, and length. Chapter 9 of the printed text discusses cohesion—ways of making one sentence flow naturally from another so readers can follow you without straining. *Arrangement* refers to a paragraph’s internal organization. This is pretty much automatic in set-pattern paragraphs (though it can take some work on your part to make sure you’ve got it right), but it can be a larger problem in the open-ended variety. Think back to the happy-pig paragraph. How did James McWilliams decide what went where? Well, suppose he was working, as a lot of us do, from a set of details he’d scribbled down somewhere or stored in his head—things that make Bob Comis the good kind of pig farmer. Here they are in scrambled order. He wanted to cover 1) the natural setting of Comis’s pig enclosures, 2) the pigs’ activities, 3) their deaths, and 4) Comis’s feelings for his pigs; moreover, he wanted to get in 5) that quote about Platonic ideals.
McWilliams might reasonably have thought to himself that Comis’s attachment to his pigs should come first. If Comis didn’t like and understand his pigs, the other things would not have come about. Big, natural forage areas make it possible for the pigs to root and play freely, so that’s a good candidate for the following spot, but the quote about Plato could go almost anywhere, and McWilliams chose to put it next, followed by the rooting and playing sentence. Whatever else he might have done, it makes sense to save the death sentence for last. It ends the paragraph, along with the pigs. As his deadline loomed, McWilliams chose this order: 4, 1, 5, 2, 3. Other arrangements might have worked, but this one serves him well.

Here’s another example. *Convergence* means wealth becoming more evenly distributed; *divergence* means a wider gap between rich and poor:

According to [Thomas] Piketty, whose data on income and wealth span three centuries and 20 countries, the forces of convergence (the spread of knowledge and skills, for example) are considerable, but those of divergence have typically had the upper hand. The crux of his argument is a deceptively simple formula: \( r > g \), where \( r \) stands for the average annual rate of return on capital (i.e. profits, dividends, interest, and rents) and \( g \) stands for the rate of economic growth. For much of modern history, he contends, the rate of return on capital has hovered between 4 and 5 percent, while the growth rate has been decisively lower, between 1 and 2 percent. (Piketty makes a compelling case that economic growth, which depends in good part on population growth, is unlikely to accelerate dramatically anywhere but in Africa, given current demographic trends.) Thus he adduces capitalism’s "principal destabilizing force": whenever \( r > g \), "capitalism
automatically generates arbitrary and unsustainable inequalities that radically undermine the meritocratic values on which democratic societies are based."\(^2\)

Inequality of wealth is common and growing. Why? Picketty has a formula to explain this. Applied to historical data, his formula fits the economic facts. Then comes a digression on Africa, which is a possible exception to the rule. The result of all this: an ominous trend toward destabilized democracies. Again, other arrangements are possible, but this one makes sense, especially putting the future result Picketty envisions in the position of emphasis at the end of the paragraph. You may have your doubts about the ideas in the passage, but you can’t deny they are clearly laid out.

The topic of paragraph length is more controversial, because standards keep changing. While there is no set length for paragraphs (the three to five sentence rule you may have been taught in middle school has never been realistic), they do seem to be getting shorter. Paragraphs in John Ruskin’s *The Stones of Venice*, 1851-53, often run over five hundred words. (Don’t worry; I don’t mean to quote one.) Today it’s commonplace to see one- or two-sentence paragraphs in newspapers, but more than a light sprinkling of those would look distinctly odd in academic and professional writing.

Introductory, transition, and conclusion paragraphs are exceptions. They tend to be shorter than development paragraphs covering more detailed information. The average development paragraph in *Understanding Style* is about eight sentences and 150 words, not a bad middle ground between Ruskin and *USA Today* and a reasonable ballpark figure to aim for. A quick survey of articles in *The Atlantic*, *Harper’s Magazine*, and *The New Yorker*, will probably turn up a similar figure, though the writers might toss in a shorter paragraph here or there to spotlight

an important point or just for variety’s sake. If your average development paragraphs are routinely a lot shorter, say well under a hundred words, they probably need more heft. This is another detail word processing makes it easy to check. Just block a paragraph and the program will tell you how many words it contains. This one holds 148.³

If you do find yourself plumping up a slender paragraph, make sure you add substance, not just air. A good way to ensure that is to do a six-questions or Christensen analysis to see where new material would help and what kind is needed. Here, for instance, is a pretty anemic effort:

The 1930s had a lot to do with today’s fashions. Both men and women’s outfits changed a great deal from earlier looks. Women’s figures began to show more, and so did men’s.

For instance, women began to wear flattering brassieres and pants.

At 42 words, this is very short for a development paragraph. An imaginary reader might well ask “Fashions changed how? Can you give me a few more for-instances? How can a brassiere be flattering?” and “So what?” A Christensen analysis would look like this:

1. The 1930s had a lot to do with today’s fashions.

2. Both men and women’s outfits changed a great deal from earlier looks.

3. Women’s figures began to show more, and so did men’s.

4. For instance, women began to wear flattering brassieres and pants.

Only one sentence at each level of development! That’s a sure sign the paragraph needs more material, especially specific examples. Notice also that the point about men’s fashions is not supported at all. Here is what Deborah Cohen made of the same general idea:

³ An even quicker way to survey your paragraph development is to highlight a paragraph you think is well developed and then scan the whole piece at about 30% magnification. You’ll see at a glance how your other paragraphs measure up.
The way we dress now took recognizable shape during the 1930s. Men got jackets with substantial shoulder pads and darts at the waist. Women acquired sportswear, in fabrics and designs that followed the lines of the figure: clothes made for movement and ease—and equipped with pockets. They spelled escape from dependence on the handbag (or a husband’s pockets). The brassiere, an invention only a few decades old, grew molded cups for uplift and became standard garb. And where would we be without slacks? For women, they still counted as daring 80 years ago, but there was no doubt that they would catch on.

“The Way We Look Now”

At 104 words, Cohen’s version is still on the short side, but it’s comfortably in the safe zone for development paragraphs and does a good job of answering readers’ likely questions, especially the “So what?” It wasn’t just a matter of clothes. Women got a new measure of independence along with their pockets and slacks.

Exercise 4

1. Here’s a garbled narrative paragraph. See if you can work out the original ordering of the sentences:

- Once straightened away, Orb took aim on Normandy Invasion, who briefly hit the front approaching the quarter pole, but Joel Rosario booted Orb into first at the wire.
- Rosario appeared confident he was on the best horse and did not want to risk getting him stopped
- As the field went around the next to last turn, Orb began a powerful rally, going from one of the trailers to a looming threat at the head of the stretch.
• Orb, starting from post 16, got a gorgeous trip from Rosario, who dropped behind and saved ground on the first turn.
• Rosario kept Orb in the middle of the track on the far side.
• Palace Malice roared out of the gate, building a 3 1/2-length lead through the first half-mile and six furlongs, with Oxbow and Verrazano closest.

2. These sentences are from a development paragraph. Put them in a logical sequence. There may be more than one acceptable way of doing this.
   • “Theory of mind” means understanding that another being is capable of thought.
   • This shows they did not simply smell the treat.
   • Domesticated wolves don’t have this ability.
   • In one study dogs routinely made the right choice between two containers, one of which held a hidden treat, when a handler pointed in its direction.
   • It must have evolved in dogs over the 15,000 or so years they have been living with humans.
   • Researchers think they’ve shown that dogs have a “theory of mind.”
   • When no one pointed, they chose containers at random.
   • Several studies have put this to the test in various ways.
   • This seems to show dogs not only understand gestures but recognize knowledge in others.

3) List at least four readers’ questions about the following paragraph that could lead to a more effective expanded revision. For example,

   Automobile safety features are evolving from ways of protecting occupants, which have already proved effective at reducing deaths and injuries, to ways of avoiding accidents in the first place. For instance, backup cameras can help drivers see what’s going on behind
them. Several other technologies are equally promising, though they are likely to add to
the cost of the cars that offer them

Makeover

Rewrite the following 63-word paragraph to supply additional details and support. Feel free to
Google the topic. Aim to make your version at least twice as long.

Automobile safety features are evolving from ways of protecting occupants, which have
already been effective at reducing deaths and injuries, to ways of avoiding accidents in
the first place. For instance, backup cameras can help drivers see what’s going on behind
them. Several other technologies are equally promising, though they are likely to add to
the cost of the cars that offer them.

Your Writing

Consider the paragraphs in a piece of your writing. Where have you used set patterns? Which
paragraphs are open ended? Are some a mixture of both? Do the paragraphs unfold in a logical
way? Do they answer readers’ questions? How do they measure up in terms of length?

Checklist

1. Make sure your paragraphs are clearly connected to what has gone before.
2. Evaluate your paragraphs in terms of their purposes: introduction, transition, conclusion,
   explanation, illustration, argument, or restatement.
3. Make sure that your set-pattern paragraph follow the organization readers expect and your
   open ended paragraphs flow logically from one idea to the next.
4. Develop and evaluate your paragraphs using the six-question or Christensen methods. Check to see that your development paragraphs average a hundred words or more. If they don’t, add detail, not just more words.