

## **PARAGRAPH ORIENTATION**

Not all paragraphs are supposed to support main ideas, and if they do they are not always required to possess the same orientation. Sometimes, varying the orientation of the paragraph and its contents can be good, even beneficial for the reader. Here are a few different orientations for paragraphs:

### **1) CHRONOLOGICAL ORIENTATION**

-provides movement from one event or item to the next within time

Example:

First, purchase a hammer and nails from a local hardware store or framing shop. Second, use your visual acuity to visually balance the picture on the wall. You may have to have a partner help you. Third, use a pencil to draw a point on the wall, where you plan to insert the nail. Fourth, grasp the nail firmly between your thumb and index finger. Fifth, use the hammer to push the nail into place. And, sixth, hang your picture. You may need to adjust the picture and/or the nail depending on the slant and texture of the wall.

### **2) GENERAL-TO-SPECIFIC ORIENTATION**

-provides general information first and moves towards specific information; typically, the topic sentence comes at the beginning of the paragraph.

Example:

Pests need to be dealt with in a humane way. Rats, mice, and insects are all considered pests. For years, the prominent ideal was to use pesticides and other poisons to eradicate pests. However, in hindsight, many consumers have discovered that they were unknowingly affecting their own environments. Therefore, the best policy for dealing with pests may be finding humane ways of eradicating them.

### **3) SPECIFIC-TO-GENERAL ORIENTATION**

-provides specific information first and moves towards general information; typically, the topic sentence comes at the end of the paragraph.

Example:

Go out and have fun! People have been riding the slopes of ski resorts for years. Snowboarding is very different from skiing and allows for a different type of movement. People can ride a variety of snowboards and purchase a variety of different types of accessories for snowboarding. Regardless, snowboarding is a fun and exciting sport.

### **4) QUESTION AND ANSWER ORIENTATION**

-provides a question (or a series of question) and an answer directly beneath.

Example:

What is the meaning of life? Many scholars and philosophers have proposed an answer to this age-old question. The answer is never quite attainable, since the answer

is actually individual. Many psychologists have suggested that individual intent and a sense of purpose actually point to meaning on an individual basis. For example, a person may be good at a task and/or talent and follow that talent into a career. Thus, the task/talent becomes the meaning of life. Another person may find the meaning of life in finding satisfaction in being a parent. And, still, another person may find meaning in a profession, such as being a doctor, a teacher, a policeman, or a firefighter. Regardless, the answer is almost as perplexing as the question.

#### 5) ENDING-QUESTION ORIENTATION

-provides an supporting information yet ends with questions (usually, rhetorical questions or questions of implementation/application).

Example:

Driving in inclement weather can be dangerous. Snow, rain, and ice can affect a driver's traction, and affect their ability to steer. Thus, many drivers who brave inclement conditions may face the potential for accident and even injury. So, why not require better regulations on tires? Why not spend more money to focus on amending road conditions when the weather is not satisfactory?

#### 6) CLIMATIC ORIENTATION

-provides a movement of ideas which leads to a climatic ending or to climatic details towards the ending of the paragraph.

Example:

Sexually Transmitted Diseases have been around for centuries and have affected teens just as much as adults. However, teens are suffering from Sexually-Transmitted Diseases at an alarming rate. Cases of Chlamydia, Syphilis, AIDS, HIV, Hepatitis, and Gonorrhea have increased at an alarming rate. In fact, the Centers for Disease Study have projected cases to double, possibly even triple in the next year. Those projections contain estimates that 1 in 3 individuals could have an STD.

#### 7) SPATIAL ORIENTATION (for Referential and Narrative Writing)

-focuses on describing details from the outside perspective towards the inside perspective -or- from the surface elements towards deeper elements - or- from a macroscopic view to a microscopic view -or- from behind an object to the front of it; this orientation may reverse directions or cover other types of movement spatially.

Example:

The outer membrane of a cell (sometimes called the Cell Wall) is comprised of a double layer of lipids. Beyond the membrane is the cytoskeleton, the filaments and microtubules which act to hold the shape of the cell. Pushing inward towards the center of the cell, one can find the organelles of the cell (tiny organs of the cell) surrounded by cytosol, a gelatinous fluid that fills the cell. Organelles, either anchored to the membrane or free-floating in the cytosol, include mitochondria, chloroplasts, ribosomes, the endoplasmic reticulum, the Golgi apparatus, lysosomes, and vacuoles. At the

center of the cell is the core of the cell, the nucleus. Inside the core, one can find the cell's chromosomes.