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Writing Paragraphs

A **paragraph** is made up of several sentences, all about the same topic. If all of the sentences form a clear path to the topic, then the paragraph is a success. Paragraphs can explain, persuade, tell a story, or describe.



The Basic Parts of a Paragraph

Most paragraphs have three parts. The first part is the **topic sentence**. It gives the main idea of the paragraph. The **body** or middle part explains or describes the main idea. The **ending sentence** reminds readers what the paragraph is about. Here's how these three parts make a paragraph.

Snow Day!

- 1 It snowed a lot yesterday, so school let out early. **It started to snow before lunch. At first, a few big flakes came floating down. Then it came down harder and harder. Snow piled up on the playground. At 12:30, the principal announced that school would let out at 1:00. Thanks to the snow-storm, we had a free afternoon!**
- 2 **Topic Sentence**
- 3 **Body**
- 4 **Ending Sentence**

Writing Realistic Stories

Writers of **realistic stories** usually get their ideas from things that happened to them. They write about their experiences, but they change parts or add new details. The added material makes the real story fictional (made-up). Sometimes these stories are called realistic fiction.

As you read this chapter, notice how the sample story on the next page sounds real. Everything in the story could have happened, but parts of it are made-up.



Sample Realistic Story

Jonathan's story started with a real event, but a lot of his story is made-up. For example, he changed the names of the main characters, added some new details, and made the ending a little different.

A Very Far Hit

Naming
the main
character

"Batter up!" called the umpire. Bill played for the Tigers, and his team was playing the Bees.

The Bees were up first. The first batter was Nick, and he hit a fly ball. "Got it!" shouted Bill as he caught Nick's fly.

Stating
the
problem

After three outs, the Tigers came to bat. It was Bill's turn to bat. Back came that scary feeling that Bill had felt before. He was afraid he would strike out. He just needed to remember the coach's tip about holding the bat and following through.

"Here it comes!" shouted the coach.

Giving an
exciting
detail

Bill stood ready. The ball zoomed straight toward the plate, and Bill smashed it with his bat. The hit sounded like metal garbage lids clanging. The ball flew over the outfield fence.

The coach whistled. "Wow! Home run!"

Ending in
a fun
way

Later that evening, Bill got a phone call from his grandmother in Pittsburgh. She said, "Hi, Bill. A funny thing happened this afternoon. A baseball shot through the window and landed in my lap!"

Bill laughed. He knew his mom had been on the phone. "That was my homer, Gran. Nice hit, huh?"

Responding to Writing Prompts

On some tests, you are asked to respond to a writing prompt.

Tips for Responding to a Narrative Prompt

A narrative prompt asks you to share a true story from your own life. Here's how to give your best response:

- **Read the prompt carefully.** Look for directions about what form (paragraph or essay) the response should take.
- **Plan your answer.** Quickly list the key events that you want to share in the order in which they happened.
- **Write your answer.** The beginning should tell what your story is about. The middle should tell the story in time order. The ending should tell how the story ended.
- **Read and revise your response.** Leave time to check your work.

Sample narrative prompt: Write a paragraph about a time when you felt thankful. Share details in time order.

I felt thankful at my family reunion. My aunts, uncles, and cousins met at a park. We played volleyball and swam in a lake. Then we gathered at picnic tables and ate barbecue. I sat next to my cousins Zach and Stacy. We laughed at Uncle Jim's jokes and crazy stories. Afterwards, I felt thankful for a great day with my wacky family.

Tips for Responding to an Explanatory Prompt

An explanatory prompt asks you to explain a topic in a special way. Here's how to give your best response:

- **Read the prompt carefully.** Look for special directions, including the form your response should take.
- **Plan your answer.** Make a list of key details.

One-Room School

kids of different ages
no janitor
lunch from home

My School

kids close to the same age
two janitors
lunch in cafeteria

- **Write your answer.** The beginning should tell what your response is about. The middle should give the key points. The ending should tie everything together.
- **Read and revise your response.** Leave time to check your work.

Sample explanatory prompt: Write a paragraph comparing your school to a one-room school.

A one-room school is not like my school. In a one-room school, kids of all ages are in the same room. In my classroom, the kids are all close to the same age. One-room schools have just one or two teachers. My school has multiple teachers for each grade. A last difference is we have a cafeteria. Kids in one-room schools bring lunches from home.

Colon

A **colon** is used in three special cases, including to show time.

To make a colon, put one dot on top of another one (:).

Between Numbers in Time

Use a colon between the parts of a number showing time.

My school starts at 7:45 a.m.

I'll meet you on the playground at 3:30.

In a Business Letter

Use a colon after the greeting in a business letter.

Dear Ms. Yolen:

Dear Editor:

Dear Mr. Wilson:

Dear Manager:

To Introduce a List

Use a colon to introduce a list.

I don't like to do these things:
take showers, do chores, or go
to bed early.



Apostrophe

An **apostrophe** is used to make contractions or to show ownership.

An apostrophe looks like a comma, but it is placed between letters like this: It's lunchtime!

In Contractions

Use an apostrophe to form a contraction. The apostrophe takes the place of one or more letters.

Contraction

don't

isn't

it's

Short For

do not

is not

it is / it has

Contraction

they're

you're

wasn't

Short For

they are

you are

was not

To Form Possessives (Ownership)

Singular Possessive

An apostrophe plus an **s** is added to a singular noun to show ownership. (Singular means "one.")

My friend's dog ate crumbs off of a dish. Then his dog tried to eat the dish!

Plural Possessive

An apostrophe is usually added after the **s** in a plural noun to show ownership. (Plural means "more than one.")

Both brothers' bikes have flat tires.

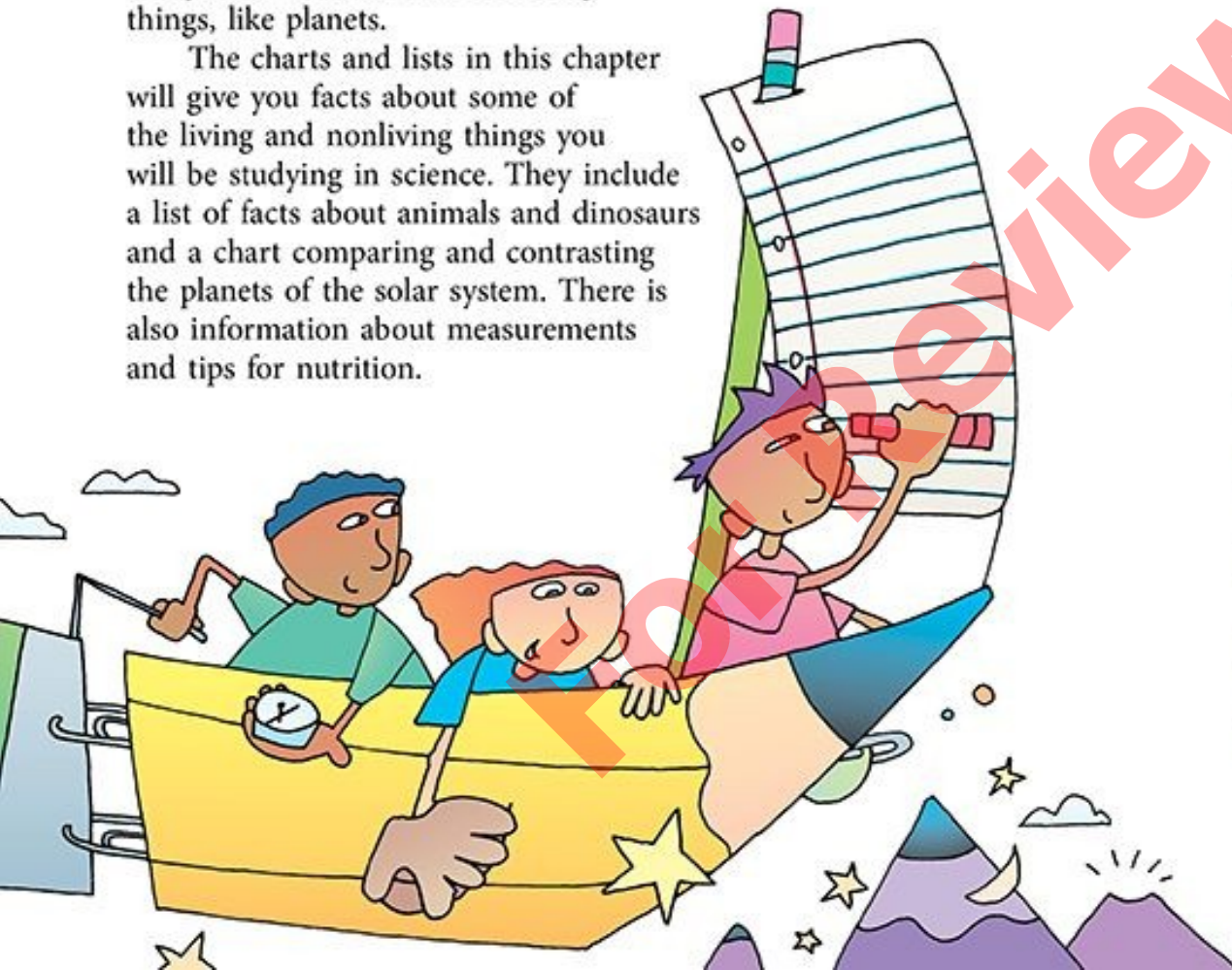
For plural nouns not ending in **s**, an apostrophe plus an **s** must be added.

My mice's cage is a mess.

Exploring Science

Science takes you on a journey to discover some of the wonders of life. On this journey, you can study about living things, like animals, and nonliving things, like planets.

The charts and lists in this chapter will give you facts about some of the living and nonliving things you will be studying in science. They include a list of facts about animals and dinosaurs and a chart comparing and contrasting the planets of the solar system. There is also information about measurements and tips for nutrition.



Animal Facts

Animal	Male	Female	Young	Group	Gestation (days)	Longevity (years)
Bear	He-bear	She-bear	Cub	Sleuth	180-240	18-20 (34)*
Cat	Tom	Queen	Kitten	Clutter/Clowder	52-65	10-17 (30)
Cattle	Bull	Cow	Calf	Drove/Herd	280	9-12 (25)
Chicken	Rooster	Hen	Chick	Brood/Flock	21	7-8 (14)
Deer	Buck	Doe	Fawn	Herd	180-250	10-15 (26)
Dog	Dog	Bitch	Pup	Pack/Kennel	55-70	10-12 (24)
Donkey	Jack	Jenny	Foal	Herd/Pace	340-385	18-20 (63)
Duck	Drake	Duck	Duckling	Brace/Herd	21-35	10 (15)
Elephant	Bull	Cow	Calf	Herd	515-760	30-60 (98)
Fox	Dog	Vixen	Cub/Kit	Skulk	51-60	8-10 (14)
Goat	Billy	Nanny	Kid	Tribe/Herd	135-163	12 (17)
Goose	Gander	Goose	Gosling	Flock/Gaggle	30	25-30
Horse	Stallion	Mare	Filly/Colt	Herd	304-419	20-30 (50+)
Lion	Lion	Lioness	Cub	Pride	105-111	10 (29)
Monkey	Male	Female	Boy/Girl	Band/Troop	149-179	12-15 (29)
Rabbit	Buck	Doe	Bunny	Nest/Warren	27-36	6-8 (15)
Sheep	Ram	Ewe	Lamb	Flock/Drove	121-180	10-15 (16)
Swan	Cob	Pen	Cygnets	Bevy/Flock	30	45-50
Swine	Boar	Sow	Piglet	Litter/Herd	101-130	10 (15)
Tiger	Tiger	Tigress	Cub	Streak/Ambush	105	19
Whale	Bull	Cow	Calf	Gam/Pod/Herd	276-365	37
Wolf	Dog	Bitch	Pup	Pack	63	10-12 (16)

* () Record for oldest animal of this type