

PARAGRAPH PRE-WRITING STRATEGIES

Goal: To Learn how paragraphs are constructed

IDENTIFYING THE MAIN IDEA

Before the student is asked to write a paragraph, s/he is first taught that good writers usually put the main idea first or last in a paragraph. The teacher provides a paragraph at the student's independent reading level. The student is asked to underline the main idea. This skill can be difficult and may take several weeks of practice.

IDENTIFYING RELATED AND UNRELATED IDEAS

The student is also taught that good writers relate all of the paragraph's sentences to the main idea. The teacher provides a paragraph with an unrelated idea. The student's task is to cross out the correct statement. Initially, the errors are blatant. As the student's skill develops, the teacher can make the errors more subtle.

SENTENCE STRIPS/INDEX CARDS

Provide the student with a series of sentences which s/he is required to organize (e.g., a main topic sentence and 2 or 3 supporting statements). The sentences could be on paper strips, on separate index cards, or on a word processor.

SEQUENTIAL PICTURES

Provide the student with a series of 3 to 4 pictures in sequential order. The student is asked to orally generate the content so that thinking is devoted to ideation and creativity rather than transcription.