



Academ Writing

*from paragraph to essay*



## 5. *Opinion Paragraphs*

### -Opinions vs. Facts:

A fact is a piece of information that is true; whether we like it or no, it is true.

e.g.1. Baghdad is the capital of Iraq.

e.g.2. All human beings die.

An Opinion is an idea or belief about a particular subject or thing; our opinions can differ a lot.

e.g.1. Grammar is interesting.

e.g.2. On-line learning is a disaster!

# Facts & Opinion Paragraphs

Writers use (interesting) facts to support their opinions & to justify their beliefs.

I-Read this letter to the editor of a newspaper. Answer the questions.

- a. What is the main idea of this paragraph? Circle the sentence.
- b. What is the writer's purpose? Why did he write this letter?
- c. Underline the sentences or parts of sentences that show an opinion.
- d. Why do you think the writer included a fact in this paragraph?

*Dear Editor,*

*More people should ride bicycles into town. Last year, seventy-three percent of all workers drove their own car to work. Car traffic in town is terrible, parking places are hard to find, and pollution from cars is a real problem. Citizens who want a cleaner, nicer place to live ought to try this non-polluting form of transport. Cycling is good exercise, too! The city must not allow this problem to get worse. Instead, people should ride bicycles to work and school-and enjoy the health benefits of daily exercise.*

**Bill Adams/Bellingham**

# Answers

A–The first sentence expresses *the main idea*.

B–The writer is trying to convince other people in his town to ride bicycles. He wrote the letter to show them why they should ride bicycles.

C–Sentences and phrases that show an opinion are: ‘More people should ride bicycles into town’; ‘Car traffic in town is terrible’; ‘parking places are hard to find’; ‘pollution from cars is a real problem’; ‘Citizens ... ought to try this nonpolluting form of transport’. ‘Cycling is good exercise’; ‘The city must not allow this problem to get worse’; ‘people should ride bicycles to work and school’.

D–The writer included a fact (seventy-three percent of all workers drove their own car to work) to support his opinion.

2 Do these types of writing use mostly facts, mostly opinions, or an even mixture of both? Write F for fact, O for opinion, or B for both.

- a. film review >>>> (O or B)
- b. advice column >>>> (O)
- c. police report of a crime >>>> (F)
- d. travel brochure >>>> (B)
- e. news report >>>> (F)
- f. book report for a university literature class >>>> (O or B)
- g. magazine advertisement >>>> (B)
- h. personal e-mail to a friend >>>> (O or B)

3-Can you think of other types of writing that use opinions? Make a list. Then make a list of types of writing that use facts.

**Use opinions:** (1) editorials in newspapers and magazines, (2) personal essays, (3) restaurant reviews, etc.

**Use facts:** (1) business reports , (2) summaries or minutes of meetings, (3) encyclopedia entries, etc.

4 Read these sentences. Write F if the sentence is a fact, and O if the sentence is an opinion.

a. Airfares have become too expensive. = Opinion

b. English is an easier language to learn than Arabic. = Opinion

c. Owls are birds that hunt at night. = Fact

d. I was born in New York City. = Fact

e. Exercise is the best way to stay healthy. = Opinion

f. Internet use has increased every year since its beginning. = Fact

g. Engineering is the best career choice. = Opinion

h. Big cities are dangerous at night. = Opinion



5. Write three fact sentences and three opinion sentences.

A- Facts:

1- I am 47 years old.

2- Baghdad is the capital of Iraq.

3- Whales breathe normal air.

B-Opinions:

1- Composition Writing is the best course this year.

2- The green colour is awful.

3- Coffee is the best morning drink.

## Modal auxiliaries

Introductory Phrases such as 'I think' & 'I believe' are used in speaking; they should be avoided in writing because they:

1- are not needed.

2- weaken your opinion; they make you sound less sure of your ideas.

THE SUBSTITUTE IS:

1- modal auxiliaries & transition words

Modals show the strength of a writer's argument.

Modals can be used in:

the **affirmative**:

e.g.

1- You could have added another support point here.

2- The government should build new buildings to our college.

Or the **negative**:

e.g.

1- You do not have to mention this detail.

2- The city cannot transform The Maqal Port into a tourist place.

## *Degree of Strength in Modals*

Modals differ in the degree of strength they express as follows:

**Weakest** : could

should

**Stronger** : ought to

**Strongest**: has to/must

**Weakest**: doesn't have to

**Stronger** : shouldn't

**Strongest**: can't/ must not

7. Look again at the paragraph on page 33. Circle the modal auxiliaries. How strong do you think the writer's opinions were?

*Dear Editor,*

*More people should ride bicycles into town. Last year, seventy-three percent of all workers drove their own car to work. Car traffic in town is terrible, parking places are hard to find, and pollution from cars is a real problem. Citizens who want a cleaner, nicer place to live ought to try this non-polluting form of transport. Cycling is good exercise, too! The city must not allow this problem to get worse. Instead, people should ride bicycles to work and school-and enjoy the health benefits of daily exercise.*

Bill Adams/Bellingham

8. Read the paragraph below. Circle the most appropriate modal auxiliary in each sentence.

Dear Editor,

I agree with Bill Adams's opinion in his recent letter saying that people **should**/~~do not have~~ to ride their bicycles into town. However, there is one problem with this idea. The roads in town are so narrow and full of cars that you **can't**/~~ought to~~ ride safely on them. If people are going to ride bicycles into town, the city **could**/**must** make some cycle paths for people to use. Maybe the city **could**/~~mustn't~~ charge a small additional tax on fuel to pay for the cycle paths. Motorists have created the problem, so they ~~could~~/**should** pay for the solution. The city **ought to**/~~doesn't have~~ to support cyclists like Bill Adams by making more cycle paths.

Melissa Green

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# Connectors of cause and effect

How to use connectors of cause and effect for expressing opinions

'Because', 'since', 'therefore' and 'so' are connectors of cause and effect.

They join two ideas when one idea causes or explains the other.

'Because' and 'since' introduce the cause or reason ,

And 'so' and 'therefore' introduce the effect or result:

cause / reason

effect / result

petrol is becoming scarce and expensive

we should develop electric cars

For example:

Because petrol is becoming scarce and expensive, we should develop electric cars.

We should develop electric cars since petrol is becoming scarce and expensive.

Petrol is becoming scarce and expensive, so we should develop electric cars.

'Therefore' is slightly different. It joins the ideas in two sentences:

Petrol is becoming scarce and expensive . Therefore, we should develop electric cars.

**12. In the examples above , underline the causes. Circle the results. Do the connectors of cause and effect come before the cause or before the result?**

Because petrol is becoming scarce and expensive, we should develop electric cars.

We should develop electric cars since petrol is becoming scarce and expensive.

Petrol is becoming scarce and expensive, so we should develop electric cars.

Petrol is becoming scarce and expensive . Therefore, we should develop electric cars.



## Punctuation note

- When *because* or *since* begin a sentence, use a comma after the first part of the sentence (the cause ).
- When the effect or result comes first, don't use a comma before *because* and *since*.
- A result or effect beginning with *so* is usually the second part of a sentence. Use a comma before *so* .
- Use *Therefore* after a full stop .
- Use a comma after *Therefore*.

**13. Complete this opinion paragraph using *because* or *since*, *so*, or *Therefore*.**

**Add punctuation where necessary.**

Bruce Lee (1940–1973), the greatest action movie star of all time, should be given a lifetime achievement award for his work in films. Bruce died tragically in 1973 <sup>a.</sup> .....



he wouldn't be able to receive the award himself, but his fans all over the world would love to see him honoured. Why was Bruce Lee so great? The fight scenes in his films were amazing <sup>b.</sup> ..... Bruce was always in top physical condition. His body was almost perfect. He was also a great actor. <sup>c.</sup> ..... he started acting when he was just six years old, he was very comfortable and natural in front of the camera. His face was very expressive <sup>d.</sup> ..... he was able to communicate a lot of feeling with a simple look. Bruce always looked good on film <sup>e.</sup> ..... he was so charming. Bruce Lee was a talented actor, a brilliant fighter, and an almost perfect example of physical fitness. <sup>f.</sup> ..... he should receive an award that recognises his great contribution to the art of film making.

# Answers

A- ,so

B- because OR since

C- Because OR Since

D- ,so

E- because OR since

F- Therefore,

**14.** Use the connectors of cause and effect in brackets to join these ideas. You may change the order of ideas. You may make one sentence or two . Use appropriate punctuation.

a. The city doesn't have enough money, so we ought to increase council tax.

b. I'm going to leave my part-time job because I don't have enough time for my homework.

Because I don't have enough time for my homework, I'm going to leave my part-time job.

c. Some plants and trees have been dying since this summer has been very dry.

Since this summer has been very dry, some plants and trees have been dying.

d. Many students are graduating with nursing degrees. Therefore, it might be hard for nurses to find jobs in the future .

e. My friends all recommend that restaurant, so I will try it this weekend.