

Writing Solution Paragraphs

While the best writers rarely follow scripted templates, they almost always include the same kinds of sentences in their work. Similar to introductions, solution paragraphs in problem-solution pieces include grabbers, backgrounders, persuaders, and closers. The difference comes in the content shared. Use this handout to craft a draft of a paragraph explaining one of your solutions to an audience. While the sentences don't have to appear in the order listed in the table, it's usually the best way to organize your solution paragraph. In the right-hand column, write more than one possible sentence and choose the best! In the "Gathering Feedback" portion, have a parent or a partner use the questions provided to rate the draft of your introduction.

| Organizer for Solution Paragraphs | |
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| Type of Sentences | Possible Sentences |
| <p>Grabber sentences are designed to get your audience's attention! They come first in any paragraph on purpose. Without a good grabber, your readers are unlikely to even consider the problems or solutions that you're suggesting.</p> <p>The grabber sentences in a solution paragraph must clearly state the solution that you'd like your audience to consider. By starting your paragraph with a clear statement of your solution, you're helping your audience follow your thinking. Grabber sentences in solution paragraphs answer the question, "What is most interesting or unique about this solution?"</p> <p>Example: <i>Fighting back against global warming really is as easy as changing a light bulb!</i></p> | |
| <p>Backgrounder sentences are designed to give your audience enough information to understand your topic. In the solution paragraphs of a problem-solution piece, backgrounder sentences describe the solution that you'd like your audience to consider.</p> <p>Remember to keep your backgrounder sentences focused on one solution. Also remember that backgrounder sentences should be neutral. You're just trying to share information here—not persuade your readers. Backgrounder sentences in solution paragraphs answer the question, "How will this solution work?"</p> <p>Example: <i>That's because lighting accounts for 20 percent of the electricity that you use in your home, and a new type of light bulb called compact fluorescent uses 75 percent less electricity than old-fashioned light bulbs. Changing just one light bulb in your home can save you almost twenty-five dollars over the life of the light bulb. Each bulb that you change will keep nearly four hundred pounds of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere.</i></p> | |

| <p>Persuader sentences in a solution paragraph are designed to convince your reader that your solution is worth pursuing and has a reasonable chance of succeeding. Persuader sentences can include personal reactions or opinions. They can also include specific examples. Persuader sentences in solution paragraphs should answer the question, “Why does this solution matter?”</p> <p>Example: <i>Imagine the amount of carbon we'd keep out of the atmosphere if every one of the world's 6 billion residents saved four hundred pounds of carbon dioxide each. With almost no effort or experience, we could change the world.</i></p> | |
|--|-------------------------|
| <p>Closer sentences in the solution paragraphs are designed to convince readers to take action—whether that action is something concrete like making changes in their own life or less tangible like becoming an advocate in favor of the solution you are proposing. Closer sentences in solution paragraphs should answer the question, “What should readers do next?”</p> <p>Example: <i>The best part of changing light bulbs as a solution for global warming is that if you really care, you can take action today. Just head out to the local Walmart and pick up some compact fluorescent light bulbs!</i></p> | |
| Final Drafts | |
| Sample Solution Paragraph | Your Solution Paragraph |
| <p>Fighting back against global warming really is as easy as changing a light bulb! That's because lighting accounts for 20 percent of the electricity that you use in your home, and a new type of light bulb called compact fluorescent uses 75 percent less electricity than old-fashioned light bulbs. Changing just one light bulb in your home can save you almost twenty-five dollars over the life of the light bulb. Each bulb that you change will keep nearly four hundred pounds of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere. Imagine the amount of carbon we'd keep out of the atmosphere if every one of the world's 6 billion residents saved four hundred pounds of carbon dioxide each. With almost no effort or experience, we could change the world. The best part of changing light bulbs as a solution for global warming is that if you really care, you can take action today. Just head out to the local Walmart and pick up some compact fluorescent light bulbs!</p> | |

Gathering Feedback

1. Which sentence do you like the best in the draft? Why?

2. Were there any sentences that left you confused? Which ones? How would you have changed these sentences to make them more effective?

3. Has the author left you convinced that the solution presented is possible? Do you understand how his or her solution is supposed to work? Are practical steps for getting involved suggested? Do you know what to do next?