

Writing Materials — Foundation B

Paragraph Structure, Verb Tenses & Editing Skills | Bich Nguyen | M.A. TESOL

This unit builds paragraph-writing skills for Foundation B students through three connected strands: (1) recognizing and constructing topic and supporting sentences, (2) reviewing and applying present, past, and future simple tense with graded practice from controlled exercises to free writing, and (3) self-editing for tense accuracy, capitalization, and punctuation. Each grammar point moves from controlled practice (fill-in-the-blank, sentence transformation) to freer, personalized production (paired interviews, short passages about the student's own life). A full answer key for all closed-response exercises is provided at the end of this document.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

1. Identify a topic sentence and supporting sentences in a paragraph, and write their own.
2. Use present, past, and future simple tense accurately in both controlled exercises and original writing.
3. Brainstorm and organize ideas into a paragraph with a clear topic sentence, supporting ideas, and a concluding sentence.
4. Self-edit a paragraph for verb tense, capitalization, and punctuation.

Unit 1: The Paragraph

What Is a Paragraph?

A paragraph consists of sentences. It has a topic sentence that gives the main idea of the paragraph, and supporting sentences that support the main idea. Supporting sentences have different functions, such as giving examples or reasoning.

Activity 1: Analyzing a Paragraph

Having supportive friends is beneficial for our mental health. First, we can share many things with friends who are willing to listen to us. This can help us reduce stress and anxiety. Second, friends can help us with some difficulties in life, such as school and work. For example, some good friends might support us with studying.

5. What is the main idea of this paragraph?

6. Does the paragraph have a topic sentence? What are the supporting sentences, and what are their functions?

Activity 2: Writing Topic & Supporting Sentences

Write a topic sentence and a supporting sentence for each topic below.

Example: Fast food — Topic sentence: Fast food is convenient but often unhealthy. Supporting idea: For example, many fast food meals are high in salt and fat.

Topic 1: Fast food

Topic sentence:

Supporting idea (example, explanation, etc.):

Topic 2: Online classes

Topic sentence:

Supporting idea (example, explanation, etc.):

Activity 3: Reading & Response

Read the article below and discuss with a partner: what are the effects of fast food on children?

Junk Food and TV

As we all know, many of the food commercials aimed at children are for foods high in fat, sugar, and/or salt, and low in nutritional value. Some research suggests that watching ads for processed foods encourages children to eat more.

Researchers from the University of Liverpool in the United Kingdom exposed 60 children, ages 9 to 11, to both food advertisements and toy advertisements, followed by a cartoon and free food.

The children ate more after the food advertisements than after the commercials for toys, the study found. The obese children in the study increased their consumption of food the most (134%) after watching the food ads, compared to overweight children (101%) and normal-weight children (84%).

Source: webmd.com/diet/features/junk-food-facts

Write a paragraph (4–5 sentences) discussing the effects of fast food.

Topic sentence:

Supporting idea 1:

Supporting idea 2:

Supporting idea 3:

Lesson 1: Grammar — Verb Tenses

1. Present Simple Tense

Usage:

- General truths and facts
- Habits and routines

Structure of the Present Simple

Type	Structure	Example
Positive	Subject + base verb (+s/es for he/she/it) Subject + to be + adjective/noun	He plays football. They read books. She is a teacher.
Negative	Subject + do/does not + base verb Subject + to be + not + adjective/noun	I do not like tea. She does not eat meat. They are not tall.
Question	Do/Does + subject + base verb To be + subject + adjective/noun	Do you play guitar? Does he work here? Are you sad?

Exercise 1: Fill in the Blanks

Use the present simple form of the verb in parentheses.

7. She _____ (go) to school every day.
8. They _____ (not / watch) TV in the morning.
9. My brother _____ (play) football on weekends.
10. I _____ (like) chocolate ice cream.
11. We _____ (study) English on Mondays.
12. He _____ (not / eat) meat.
13. _____ you _____ (read) books often?
14. The train _____ (leave) at 9:00 a.m.

Exercise 2: Ask Your Partner

Work in pairs. Use the words to make correct present simple questions and ask your partner.

15. you / like / coffee
16. she / go / to school / by bus
17. what / he / do / on weekends
18. they / play / football / every Saturday
19. where / your parents / live

Exercise 3: Write

Write a paragraph of 4-5 sentences about your daily routine using the present simple tense.

2. Past Simple Tense

Usage:

- Completed actions in the past
- Past habits or routines

Structure of the Past Simple

Type	Structure	Example
Positive	Subject + past form of verb Subject + was/were + noun/adjective	She worked late. I was a student five years ago.
Negative	Subject + did not + base verb Subject + was/were + not + noun/adjective (Note: was not = wasn't, were not = weren't)	They did not go to school. They weren't happy yesterday.
Question	Did + subject + base verb Was/Were + subject + noun/adjective	Did you see the movie? Was she sick last week?

Exercise 1: Fill in the Blanks

Use the correct past simple form of the verb in parentheses.

20. She _____ (visit) her grandmother last weekend.
21. They _____ (not / watch) the movie yesterday.
22. I _____ (eat) pizza for dinner.
23. We _____ (go) to the park after school.
24. He _____ (not / like) the food.
25. _____ you _____ (see) the new student?
26. The dog _____ (bark) all night.
27. My parents _____ (travel) to Japan in 2020.

Exercise 2: Ask Your Partner

Use the words to form correct past simple questions.

28. you / visit / your cousin / last summer
29. what / she / do / yesterday
30. they / go / to the museum / on Sunday

31. when / he / arrive / at the party

32. why / you / not / call / me

Exercise 3: Change to Past Tense

Base Verb	Past Tense
walk	
play	
cook	
jump	
clean	
help	
open	
close	
talk	
watch	
dance	
study	
visit	
call	
work	
travel	
wash	
listen	
carry	
stop	

Exercise 4: Write

Write a passage of 5–6 sentences about one of your childhood memories.

3. Future Simple Tense

Note: In the future tense, we can use “be going to” and “will.” Both can be used to make predictions about the future, but they are not always interchangeable:

- Will — used for a decision made at the moment of speaking, promises, and offers
- Be going to — used for a plan made before the moment of speaking, or a prediction based on present evidence

Future Tense — Structure Table

Form	Structure	Example	Usage
Positive (will)	Subject + will + base verb	She will travel to Paris.	Instant decisions, promises, predictions, offers
Negative (will)	Subject + will not (won't) + base verb	They won't come to the party.	
Question (will)	Will + subject + base verb	Will you help me?	
Positive (be going to)	Subject + am/is/are + going to + base verb	I am going to visit my grandma.	Planned actions, intentions, predictions based on evidence
Negative (be going to)	Subject + am/is/are + not + going to + base verb	He isn't going to eat that.	
Question (be going to)	Am/Is/Are + subject + going to + base verb	Are you going to watch the movie?	

Exercise 1: Fill in the Blanks

Choose “will” or “be going to” based on the context.

33. Look at those clouds! It _____ (rain) soon.
34. I think she _____ (pass) the exam.
35. We _____ (visit) our grandparents this weekend. It's already planned.
36. He's tired. He _____ (take) a nap.
37. I promise I _____ (help) you with your homework.
38. They _____ (watch) a movie tonight. They bought tickets yesterday.
39. I'm not sure. Maybe I _____ (go) to the party.
40. She _____ (start) a new job next month. It's confirmed.

Exercise 2: Choose the Correct Option

- 41. I (will / am going to) call you later.
- 42. They (will / are going to) have a baby! She's three months pregnant.
- 43. We (will / are going to) probably stay home tonight.
- 44. He (won't / isn't going to) come. He's too busy.
- 45. What (will / are you going to) do after school?

Exercise 3: Make Sentences

Use the prompts to write full sentences with the correct future form.

46. (I / help / you)

→ _____

47. (She / visit / her aunt / tomorrow)

→ _____

48. (They / not / play / football / next week)

→ _____

49. (What / you / do / this weekend?)

→ _____

50. (Look at the sky! / It / rain)

→ _____

Exercise 4: Write

Write a passage of 5–6 sentences about your future plans for the next five years.

Integrated Writing: Present, Past & Future Tense

You have reviewed present, past, and future tense. Write a short story (10–15 sentences) about a special friend in your life, using all three tenses:

- Present: Describe how you feel about that friend and what their personality is like.
- Past: Tell how you met that friend.
- Future: Tell whether you think you will still be friends with them in the future.

Lesson 2: Brainstorming to Paragraph

Warm-Up

Talk with a partner:

- Do you like to play badminton?
- How often do you play badminton?

Reading: Badminton

Badminton is a popular sport around the globe. It can be played indoors or outdoors. The game is usually played with rackets, shuttlecocks, and a net. It is a fun game to play with friends.

In badminton, we can play the game with at least two players, one on each side of a net. If there are more players, they are divided evenly. The goal of the game is to hit the shuttlecock over the net and into the opponents' court. A point is scored when the opponents miss the shuttlecock or fail to return it to the other side.

Badminton requires different skills. First, players should have good eye-hand coordination to hit the shuttlecock. Second, because the shuttlecock moves very fast, players should move quickly. Last, players should have stamina because they will move a lot.

Question 1: What is this passage mainly about?

Question 2: Identify the main idea of each paragraph.

Example: Paragraph 1 — *Badminton is a popular, easy-to-access sport that people enjoy playing with friends.*

Paragraph 1:

Paragraph 2:

Paragraph 3:

Question 3: Do the main ideas repeat each other, or does each paragraph add something new?

Question 4: How are the paragraphs connected to each other?

Activity: Brainstorming

1. What are the physical benefits of playing badminton? Give an example or explanation for each benefit.

Example: *Playing badminton can increase flexibility because players coordinate hand movement and leg movement a lot in badminton matches.*

First benefit:

Explanation or example:

Second benefit:

Explanation or example:

2. Give two reasons why badminton is good for building teamwork. Give an example or explanation for each.

Example: *You talk and listen. In doubles badminton, you must talk to your partner and listen to them. This helps you work together better.*

First reason:

Explanation or example:

Second reason:

Explanation or example:

From Ideas to Paragraph

Now that we have some ideas about badminton, let's practice turning them into a complete paragraph, based on Question 1 above.

First, we need a topic sentence:

Example: *Badminton is good for the body.*

Then, we connect the ideas from Question 1:

Example: *First, playing badminton can increase flexibility because players coordinate hand movement and leg movement a lot in badminton matches.*

Now practice connecting the rest of the ideas together:

Second, _____

Third, _____

Model Paragraph

Badminton is good for the body. First, it helps you move your arms and legs, so your body becomes more flexible. Second, it is good for your heart because you run and move fast. Third, it makes your muscles strong because you jump and hit the shuttle.

Practice: Write a Complete Paragraph

Using your brainstorming from Question 2 (teamwork), write a complete paragraph.

Extended Writing: Personal Introduction

Introduce yourself to a classmate. Include details about your history, your likes and dislikes, and your goals — use this as a chance to connect with a potential new friend. Write one paragraph with a minimum of 5 sentences.

Now write two more paragraphs to continue your introduction. Before writing, look through the topics below and circle two or three that you have not already mentioned.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| • Name | • Age | • Birthday |
| • Country | • City or hometown | • Family members |
| • School or job | • Favorite subject | • Favorite food |
| • Favorite color | • Favorite sport | • Favorite animal |
| • Hobbies | • Languages spoken | • Free time activities |
| • Favorite place | • A special skill or talent | • A dream or goal |
| • A place you want to visit | • A person you admire | • A fun memory |
| • A pet you have or want | • What makes you happy | • What makes you proud |

Choose two topics you haven't already mentioned and write two paragraphs, each following this pattern:

- Topic sentence
- Supporting idea 1
- Supporting idea 2
- Supporting idea 3
- Concluding sentence

Paragraph 2

Paragraph 3

Lesson 3: Editing Skills

Part A: Revising Tenses

Each sentence below has a tense error. Rewrite each sentence correctly.

1. She go to school every day.

2. I was play football yesterday.

3. They will goes to the zoo tomorrow.

4. He don't like apples.

5. We eats lunch at 12:00.

6. I am watched a movie last night.

7. She will going to the party.

8. My brother didn't went to the store.

9. They is happy today.

10. I will studied for the test tomorrow.

Part B: Capitalization

Rewrite this paragraph, adding capital letters where they are needed.

my name is lina. i am ten years old. i live in a small town. i go to school every day. i like to play badminton with my friends. my favorite food is rice and chicken. on the weekend, i watch cartoons and help my mother at home.

Part C: Punctuation

Rewrite this paragraph, adding capital letters and punctuation (periods and commas) where they are needed.

my name is ali i am eleven years old i live in a small village i go to school every day i like to play football with my friends after school we run and laugh a lot my favorite food is pizza and i like to drink orange juice

Part D: Revise Your Own Paragraphs

Look back at two or three paragraphs you wrote earlier in this unit. Check each one against the three areas below, and revise your paragraph if you find a mistake.

- Tenses — Did you use the correct verb tense consistently throughout the paragraph?

- Capitalization — Does every sentence start with a capital letter? Are names and places capitalized?
- Punctuation — Does every sentence end with the correct punctuation mark?

Revised paragraph:

Teacher Answer Key

(For all closed-response exercises. Writing tasks and brainstorming activities are open-ended and are best assessed against the model paragraphs provided throughout the unit.)

Lesson 1, Present Simple — Exercise 1

1. goes 2. do not watch / don't watch 3. plays 4. like 5. study 6. does not eat / doesn't eat 7. Do ... read 8. leaves

Lesson 1, Present Simple — Exercise 2 (sample questions)

1. Do you like coffee? 2. Does she go to school by bus? 3. What does he do on weekends? 4. Do they play football every Saturday? 5. Where do your parents live?

Lesson 1, Past Simple — Exercise 1

1. visited 2. did not watch / didn't watch 3. ate 4. went 5. did not like / didn't like 6. Did ... see 7. barked 8. traveled

Lesson 1, Past Simple — Exercise 2 (sample questions)

1. Did you visit your cousin last summer? 2. What did she do yesterday? 3. Did they go to the museum on Sunday? 4. When did he arrive at the party? 5. Why didn't you call me?

Lesson 1, Past Simple — Exercise 3 (verb conjugation)

cook → cooked, jump → jumped, clean → cleaned, help → helped, open → opened, close → closed, talk → talked, watch → watched, dance → danced, study → studied, visit → visited, call → called, work → worked, travel → traveled, wash → washed, listen → listened, carry → carried, stop → stopped

Lesson 1, Future Simple — Exercise 1

1. is going to rain 2. will pass 3. are going to visit 4. is going to take 5. will help 6. are going to watch 7. will go 8. is going to start

Note: several of these items are defensible with either “will” or “be going to” depending on how much the student emphasizes evidence vs. general prediction — accept a reasoned alternative answer.

Lesson 1, Future Simple — Exercise 2

1. will 2. are going to 3. will 4. isn't going to 5. are you going to

Lesson 1, Future Simple — Exercise 3 (sample sentences)

1. I will help you. 2. She is going to visit her aunt tomorrow. 3. They are not going to play football next week. 4. What are you going to do this weekend? 5. Look at the sky! It is going to rain.

Lesson 3, Part A: Revising Tenses

1. She goes to school every day.
2. I played football yesterday.
3. They will go to the zoo tomorrow.
4. He doesn't like apples.
5. We eat lunch at 12:00.
6. I watched a movie last night.
7. She is going to the party. (or: She will go to the party.)
8. My brother didn't go to the store.
9. They are happy today.
10. I will study for the test tomorrow.

Lesson 3, Part B: Capitalization

My name is Lina. I am ten years old. I live in a small town. I go to school every day. I like to play badminton with my friends. My favorite food is rice and chicken. On the weekend, I watch cartoons and help my mother at home.

Lesson 3, Part C: Punctuation

My name is Ali. I am eleven years old. I live in a small village. I go to school every day. I like to play football with my friends. After school, we run and laugh a lot. My favorite food is pizza, and I like to drink orange juice.