



U4CA

PARAGRAPH WRITING TOOLKIT

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U4CA is a set of techniques intended to improve one's writing skill. This is composed of Unity, Coherence, Conciseness, Clarity, Concreteness, and Accuracy. The use of U4CA in paragraph writing allows for a more efficient and effective delivery of thought through writing.



Below are the characteristics of a...

1. United paragraph

- The paragraph starts with a topic sentence. This sentence contains the major idea of the whole paragraph.
- All sentences in the paragraph must be related to the idea of the topic sentence and contribute to a deeper understanding of the topic sentence.
- Remember: Stay on topic.

2. Coherent paragraph

- The ideas in the paragraph are logically ordered. Common patterns of paragraph organization are time or chronological order, space or spatial order, breakdown order, and relationship order.

Paragraph Organization	Description
Chronological Order	Describes a sequence of events, explains how a process works, or traces causes and effects.
Spatial Order	Describes a scene.
Breakdown Order	Analyzes a body of data and breaks it down into a set of categories.
Relationship Order	Compares and contrasts.

- There is a **repetition of key words** to keep the reader focused on the topic. Also, this maintains consistency in how the ideas are presented.
- The use of transitional words and phrases is present to maintain the flow of the paragraph. Below are some **transitional words or phrases** for different situations.

Situation	Transitional Words or Phrases		
Additional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in addition • besides • moreover • as if that were not enough 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • also • and • in fact • then, too 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • or, nor • furthermore • indeed • first, second, etc.
Similar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • likewise • in like manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • similarly • in much the same way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • once again • once more
Contrast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yet • although • and yet • on the contrary • for all that 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • though • nonetheless • on the other hand • even so • still 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in spite of this • nevertheless, but • surely • whereas • however



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> although and yet on the contrary for all that 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> nonetheless on the other hand even so still 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> nevertheless, but surely whereas however
Result	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> as a result wherefore consequently as a consequence and so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> so hence for this reason finally thus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> therefore in as much as all in all this is why on the whole
Reason	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> because 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> since 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for
Concession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to be sure of course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> granted (that) no doubt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> certainly doubtless
Qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> specifically frequently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> especially occasionally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> usually in particular
Illustration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for example for instance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to illustrate for one thing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> likewise similarly
Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to summarize therefore all in all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> what this adds up to in brief in short 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in a word what we have, then in summary

3. Concise paragraph

- Most effective and direct-to-the-point words are used.
- Weak or unnecessary words are deleted or replaced with more powerful and specific ones.
- Below are examples of wordy and concise sentences (Purdue University, n.d.):

Wordy	Concise
The politician talked about <u>several of the merits of</u> after-school programs in his speech.	The politician <u>touted</u> after-school programs in his speech.
Working as a pupil under someone who develops photos was an experience that really helped me learn a lot.	Working as a <u>photo technician's apprentice</u> was an <u>educational</u> experience.

4. Clear paragraph

- Clear and descriptive words** are used while vague and unclear words are avoided.
- Clichés are avoided** because they alienate readers who are not familiar with the phrase.
- Active voice** is used, and passive voice is avoided (e.g., "Researchers selected the sample" is preferred over "The sample was selected.").

5. Concrete paragraph

- Makes use of concrete language more than abstract language. Concrete language refers to words that are tangible and known through our senses. Examples are "35 degrees Celsius," "thin Persian cat," and "deep spruce green."
- Makes use of specific more than general language. For example, instead of using the word "a university sports team," one can specifically refer to "the FEU Tamaraws Men's Football Team."
- Statements are also evidence-based and are substantially supported by specific facts and examples.
- The table below is the Ladder of Abstraction (ISU Writing Center, 2016). This can help writers to classify words on a scale or continuum depending on their level of abstraction. The lower the level or number, the more specific the word is



Level	Word/Phrase
8	Food
7	Junk food
6	Dessert
5	Ice cream
4	Premium ice cream
3	Selecta's ice cream
2	Selecta's Salted Caramel ice cream
1	A double-scoop waffle cone of Selecta's Salted Caramel ice cream

6. Accurate paragraph

- The paragraph is reliable, truthful, and correct in terms of content.
- The following questions can be used to validate the accuracy of a paragraph or a written work (Kurpiel, 2023):
 - Where does the information come from?
 - Is the information supported by evidence?
 - Has the information been reviewed or refereed?
 - Can you verify any of the information in another source or from personal knowledge?
 - Does the language or tone seem biased and free of emotion?
 - Are there spelling, grammar, or other typographical errors?

UNITY

- This means that all sentences in the paragraph are related to the topic sentence and are focused on a single idea.

CONCISENESS

- This is the use of the most effective and direct-to-the-point words in a paragraph.

CLARITY

- This is the use of clear and descriptive language in a paragraph.

ACCURACY

- This is the reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the content.

COHERENCE

- All ideas in the paragraph are logically organized and flow smoothly from one idea to the next.

CONCRETENESS

- This is the use of specific and sensory-based words in a paragraph

KEY IDEAS

- Clear and descriptive words are used while vague and unclear words are avoided.
- Clichés are avoided because they alienate readers who are not familiar with the phrase.
- Active voice is used, and passive voice is avoided (e.g., "Researchers selected the sample" is preferred over "The sample was selected.").



SEVEN STEPS U4CA TECHNIQUE

1

CREATE A TOPIC SENTENCE

This sentence should contain the controlling idea that you want to be supported by the next sentences.

2

WRITE THE NEXT SENTENCES

Ensure that the next sentences are related to the topic sentence.

3

CHECK THE ORDER OF THE SENTENCES

It should be logically arranged to help with the reader's comprehension of the idea.

4

IMPROVE THE FLOW OF THE PARAGRAPH

Use transitional words or phrases to advance the coherence of the paragraph.

5

EXAMINE THE WORDS USED

Make sure that clear, specific, effective, and descriptive words and phrases are used.

6

ANALYZE THE ACCURACY

Ask questions such as "Where does the information come from?" and "Does the language seem biased?"

7

READ THROUGH

Read through the whole paragraph and double-check if all techniques are effectively used.

Examples



SAMPLE PARAGRAPHS	
Needs Improvement	Good Example
<p>To open students' Canvas account, a cloud-powered productivity platform can be used. They will open that platform and enter their username and password. The password is important and present in websites to ensure privacy and security of digital users. For me, passwords should always include numbers and special characters. Students will click a button that can lead them to a command to show all applications. Students will select the FEU Canvas Icon to open the application and start their school work.</p> <p>Reference: Missing</p>	<p>FEU students can log in to their Canvas account through Microsoft Office 365 (Reyes, 2021). First, students must visit the log-in page of Microsoft Office 365. Next, they need to enter their username and password. The format of their username should be student-number@feu.edu.ph. After that in the Office 365 portal, they must click "All Apps" to show all applications. Finally, students need to select the FEU Canvas Icon to open the application. Once these steps are done, students can now access the Canvas application and start their schoolwork.</p> <p>Reference: Reyes, T. (2021). <i>How to Access Canvas</i>. Tamaraw Easy Assist Hub. https://tamassist.feu.edu.ph/support/solutions/articles/51000242539-how-to-access-canvas</p>

The table above shows two paragraphs wherein the left paragraph does not employ the U4CA technique while the right paragraph does. The description or explanation for each highlighted part is written below.

DESCRIPTIONS/EXPLANATIONS	
Needs Improvement	Good Example
<p>Unity- Some sentences are not directly related to the topic sentence and its controlling idea.</p> <p>Coherence- Sequence of events is confusing and transitional words or phrases are not present.</p> <p>Conciseness- Vague and dead weight words are used in the paragraph.</p> <p>Clarity- The paragraph used unclear words and passive voice that make the subject unclear.</p> <p>Concreteness- Words used are not specific and not easily understood.</p> <p>Accuracy- Opinion is present in the paragraph which shows biased content. There is also no proof that the information is accurate or has been reviewed.</p>	<p>Unity- The topic sentence is present, and all sentences are related to its controlling idea.</p> <p>Coherence- Proper sequence of events and the use of transitional words or phrases are present.</p> <p>Conciseness- Direct-to-the-point words are used in the paragraph.</p> <p>Clarity- The paragraph used clear words and the active voice which make the subject clear.</p> <p>Concreteness- Words used are specific and easily understood.</p> <p>Accuracy- The information came from a reliable source and the paragraph is free from typographical and grammatical errors.</p>

Practice Exercise

Instruction: Read and analyze the tasks below. Give what is required for each task.

For numbers 1 and 2, create a topic sentence fit for the paragraph.

1. The paragraph below is an excerpt from a Time Magazine article about climate change (see Liu, 2023).

Polar bears could largely disappear by the end of the century if global warming continues, a 2020 study warned, citing alarming losses of Arctic Sea ice. Another study found that half of the world's coral reefs have already been killed by warmer waters and ocean acidification.

Possible answer: Climate change threatens global oceans and the life that depends on them in myriad ways.

2. The paragraph below is an excerpt from a National Geographic Magazine article about experiencing scuba diving (see Miller, 2023).

I double- and triple-checked gauges, was hyper focused on the feeling of breathing through a regulator, fretted in gear that felt claustrophobic, and used my arms to orient myself in the strange blue expanse, expending valuable energy. Diving is about being calm and measured. I hadn't learned that lesson yet.

Possible answer: Inexperienced divers are often busy divers, and so it was with me.

For numbers 3 and 4, create a paragraph from the given sentences or phrases by providing a topic sentence and appropriate transitional words or phrases.

3. The steps below show how to draw a dog (Crafty Morning, 2022).

- Step 1- Draw an oval with a flat top.
- Step 2- Connecting from the bottom, draw a long oval for the dog's body.
- Step 3- Draw the two ears from the head.
- Step 4- Draw an oval nose and add a little "banana" looking tail.
- Step 5- Add the dog's eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Step 6- Draw lines for the legs and ovals for the feet.

Possible answer:
Drawing a dog for beginners is quite easy. First, draw an oval with a flat top. Then connecting from the bottom, draw a long oval for the dog's body. After that, draw the two ears from the head. Next, draw an oval nose and add a little "banana" looking tail. Afterward, add the dog's eyes, nose, and mouth. Finally, draw lines for the legs and ovals for the feet.



Practice Exercise

Instruction: Read and analyze the tasks below. Give what is required for each task.

For numbers 1 and 2, create a topic sentence fit for the paragraph.

4. The phrases below show some of the similarities and differences between Facebook and Instagram (Diana, 2022).



SIMILARITIES		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post video and images • Share feed posts, Stories, Reels, and multiple photos at once • Leave comments and like someone's post 		
DIFFERENCES		
Category	Facebook	Instagram
Post Structure	Can post images, videos, and text together or individually.	Can only post visual content (images and videos) with written captions. Text-only posts are not allowed.
Social Media Games	Has Games feature	Does not have Games feature
Desktop and Mobile Optimization	Both desktop and mobile-friendly	More mobile-friendly

Possible answer:

Facebook and Instagram have similarities and differences that can be useful or disadvantageous depending on the user. For the similarities, both applications can post videos and images, and can share feed posts, stories, reels, and multiple photos at once. In addition, users can leave comments and like someone's post in both applications. As for their differences, in terms of post structure, Facebook can post images, videos, and text together or individually while Instagram can only post visual content with written captions. Text-only posts are not allowed. Also, Facebook has a feature that allows users to play games while Instagram does not. Another difference is in the line of desktop and mobile optimization; Facebook is both desktop and mobile-friendly whereas Instagram is more mobile-friendly. Both applications have interesting features that can be useful depending on the needs and demands of the netizens.

For number 5, create a paragraph about the picture shown. Employ the U4CA technique to your written work.

5. Photographer: Gourley (2019)



Possible answer:

Kids and young people marched the streets to call for action against global warming. Their call is aimed towards adults and authorities who can have a larger impact in solving the world crisis. Some placards state "Don't mess with my future" and "Defeat climate change" which emphasize the need for a solution to preserve the Earth for the next generation. The kids taking a stand show how much they care about their future and the future of the world.

MATERIALS FOR FURTHER READING

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