

LESSON 13

OPERATIONAL PARAGRAPHS



Lesson

Sometimes we want our paragraph or essay to explain how to do something. This is called an **operational** paragraph.

In an **operational** paragraph, it is important that you give the steps in the exact order they need to be done. It is also important that your directions are clear and understandable to the reader.

When planning your paragraph or essay try to think of every single step, no matter how small. Never assume your reader will already know something. As with informative paragraphs and essays, start by brainstorming. In an operational paragraph you need to think about the following:

- the purpose of the paragraph
- what the reader needs to know
- what is needed
- the steps in the process

Look below at the brainstorm for how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

Step 1: Brainstorm

Purpose: To make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich

<u>reader needs to know</u>	<u>materials</u>	<u>steps</u>
what a sandwich is	2 slices of bread	gather ingredients
what each of the ingredients are	peanut butter	smear peanut butter
	jelly	smear jelly
	knife	put together
	plate	clean up

If the reader already knows what a sandwich is and what each of the ingredients are, then your audience is probably American or Canadian, since most other countries don't have peanut butter. Usually kids eat peanut butter and jelly, so your audience is probably a North American kid. Your audience would not be a Japanese exchange student, because he or she would not be familiar with peanut butter and jelly.



Activity One

Now it is your turn to brainstorm. You will be writing about how to ride a bike safely. Your audience will be the kids in your school.

Purpose:

reader needs to know

materials

steps

Once you have brainstormed your ideas, it is time to organize your paragraph. Remember that sequencing is very important and in an operational paragraph we organize in a step by step sequence. You must organize in the exact order that the steps are done. For example, you don't want to tell someone to put the two slices of bread together before they have smeared on the peanut butter and jelly. You also need to generate a topic sentence and a conclusion/clincher sentence.

Step 2: Outline

Notice that you might have four or five steps. Less steps may mean that you forgot a step. More steps may cause the reader to get lost in the process.

Topic Sentence/Main Idea

If you need a little snack after school, try making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

What you need

need 2 slices of bread, peanut butter, jelly, a knife, a plate

Step One

(first)

smear peanut butter on one slice

Step Two

(second, then)

smear jelly on other slice

Step Three

(third, next)

put slices together

Final Step

(last, finally)

clean up your mess

Conclusion

enjoy your sandwich