PARAGRAPHS WRITING

The successful writing process involves more than merely scribbling words on paper. It involves three essential stages: Prewriting, Writing, and Postwriting.

STAGE ONE: PREWRITING

Prewriting requires the writer to develop an informal plan of attack ON PAPER!! The following steps will guide you through the Prewriting stage. Use your own paper and keep this guide as a resource until the process becomes second nature.

1. **Understanding the assignment**

   Assignment: ____________________________________________________________

   Length: ________________________________________________________________

   Due date: ______________________________________________________________

2. **Narrow your topic to a subject that interests you and can be developed in the paragraph you have been assigned.** Use a narrowing tree or brainstorming to help you do this.

   GENERAL TOPIC: A FAVORITE RESTAURANT

   SPECIFIC TOPIC: Raintree Restaurant    Louie's Café    Dan's Diner

3. **Develop a tentative TOPIC SENTENCE.** "The Raintree restaurant is a great place to take the whole family."

4. **Generate ideas:** Generating ideas is an essential part of the writing process because it helps you think of enough ideas or specific details to support, develop, or explain your topic. You might want to use **listing, clustering, or dividing,** but all require that you **visualize and brainstorm.** For example, **VISUALIZE** the restaurant that interests you the most. For this example, let's use Raintree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Convenience</th>
<th>Atmosphere</th>
<th>Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>close by</td>
<td>sports memorabilia</td>
<td>hostess seats customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good parking</td>
<td>games on TV</td>
<td>menu quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>casual, not too loud</td>
<td>refills on drinks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>waitress checks in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Menu</th>
<th>Prices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>burgers &amp; sandwiches</td>
<td>reasonable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dinner salads</td>
<td>$4 - $7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ribs &amp; steaks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. CHOOSE and ORGANIZE IDEAS:

-- Decide which supports will work best for you.
-- Organize those supports for the most effective paragraph.
-- Revise your tentative topic sentence if necessary.

**Outline Model**

Topic Sentence: The Raintree restaurant provides a great dining experience for the entire family.

I. Support #1 Atmosphere
   A. Detail #1 Sports memorabilia
   B. Detail #2 Games on TV

II. Support #2 Service
   A. Detail #1 Hostess seats quickly
   B. Detail #2 Waitress checks in

III. Support #3 Menu
   A. Detail #1 Burgers & sandwiches
   B. Detail #2 Ribs & steaks

IV. Concluding Sentence (You may wait until later but don't forget to write one at the end of your paragraph.)

**STAGE TWO: WRITING**

Write a first draft of the paragraph by

-- revising your topic sentence if necessary.
-- creating a sentence for each main support and each detail.
-- connecting each sentence with appropriate transitions where needed.
-- creating or revising a concluding sentence.

The following **first draft** is a good start, but it definitely needs revision before we can call it a finished or final paragraph.
The Raintree restaurant

The Raintree restaurant provides a great dining experience for the entire family. First, the atmosphere appeals to children as well as adults. For example, the walls are covered with sports items from baseballs to uniform shirts of famous major league players. There are high definition televisions placed around the main dining room so customers can keep up on the latest news or watch a live sporting event. Second, the service at the Raintree is excellent. A hostess quickly greets and seats each new group of diners and takes the drink order. Also, the servers are very attentive and check with the diners regularly to see if anyone needs anything. Finally, the menu is varied and superb. The children love the burger baskets and sandwiches that come with a scoop of ice cream and a cookie. Adults seem to love the tangy barbeque ribs and juicy steak entrees which include potato, vegetable, and dessert. Indeed, the Raintree has become a very popular restaurant for the entire family.

STAGE THREE: POSTWRITING

Revising: If possible, get feedback on your paragraph from peers or your instructor. If feedback is not available, analyze the strengths and weaknesses of your paragraph using the Paragraph Revision Checklist.

FORM
   1. Title: Capitalize the first and major words.
   2. Indent the first sentence.
   3. Are there the minimum number of required sentences?
   4. Is the paragraph form correct? (No blank spaces, adequate margins)

SUPPORT
   1. Are there three main supports?
   2. Does each main support explain the topic sentence?
   3. Are there at least two different and specific details for each main support?
   4. Are there clear transitions to signal main support sentences?
   5. Are appropriate transitional words or phrases used with detail sentences?
   6. Does the concluding sentence begin with an appropriate transition?
   7. Are the sentences varied in length and structure?
   8. Is the vocabulary appropriate? (no slang, abbreviations, symbols, etc.)
   9. Are the words clear and precise? (strong verbs, specific nouns, colorful descriptive words)

CONCLUSION
   1. Does the concluding sentence tie together the information presented?
   2. Have new ideas been avoided?
**Editing:** Edit your writing using the **Editing Checklist.**

1. No Run On sentences or Fragments
2. Subjects and verbs agree (both singular or both plural)
3. Words spelled correctly (Check dictionary or spell checker.)
4. Apostrophes in contractions and possessives
5. Verb tense consistent (all present or all past unless good reason)
6. Person consistency (all 3rd person or all 1st person)
7. Second person avoided ("you" "your" "you're")
8. Commas and semicolons used correctly
9. No sentence beginning with "There"
10. Checked for any "personal" errors (mistakes you tend to repeat)

**REVISED AND EDITED FINAL COPY**
(The underlining indicates revisions or editing but should not be included on your papers.)

**The Raintree Restaurant**

The Raintree restaurant provides a great dining experience for the entire family. First, the atmosphere appeals to children as well as adults. For example, the walls are covered with sports items from baseballs to uniform shirts of famous major league players. In addition to the sports memorabilia, high definition televisions are placed around the main dining room, so customers can keep up on the latest news or watch a live sporting event. Second, the service at the Raintree is excellent. A friendly hostess quickly greets and seats each new group of diners and takes the drink order. Also, the servers are very attentive and check with the patrons regularly to see if anyone needs refills or extra requests. Finally, the menu is varied and superb. The children love the burger baskets and sandwiches that come with a scoop of ice cream and a cookie. Adults seem to devour the tangy barbequed ribs and juicy steak entrees which include potato, vegetable, and dessert. Indeed, the Raintree has become a very popular restaurant among parents and children alike.

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Title – Capitalize "Restaurant."
line 1 – Indent the first line.
lines 3 and 4 – Use transition "In addition to the sports memorabilia," and eliminate "There." Add the helping verb "are."
   Insert a comma before the coordinating conjunction "so" to correct the run on sentence.
line 6 – Add the descriptive word "friendly."
line 7 – Eliminate repetition by changing "diners" to "patrons."
line 8 – Replace "anything" with "refills or extra requests."
line 10 – Eliminate repetition by changing "love" to the stronger verb "devour." Correct the word "barbeque" to barbequed."
lines 11 and 12 – Correct the spelling of "restarant" to "restaurant." Replace "for the entire family" to "among parents and children alike" to keep from repeating the topic sentence.