

SCRAMBLED PARAGRAPHS

Scrambled paragraphs are a good way to establish a competitive reading game focused on main idea and paragraph coherence established with transitional words and phrases. The fun part is stumbling in the classroom and letting fall all the single sentences of several paragraphs (carefully selected and cut up so that number of sentences is equal to or a little more than the number of students in the class.)

The first task students must perform is to find the group to which they belong. This entails finding others with writing that sounds similar, or has a common theme.

The next task is to put the sentences in order. You can start by asking the group to find the “boarder collie” sentence - the one that will make all others come together under it. (The topic sentence)

The final task is to put the rest of the sentences in the right order, using clues they find. These clues will likely be transitional words or phrases - or grammatical relationship words, like relative pronouns.

The paragraph can be copied into books, read aloud to share with class, put on overhead for sharing....?

Sample #1 (sentences to cut up)

He was only filled with an overwhelming sadness that his life would be over at sixteen.

He felt alone and wet and feverish and chilled, and he knew he was going to die now, and the knowledge made him suddenly sad.

He was not frightened.

For some reason, he was not frightened.

He felt all at once as if he had never done anything, never seen anything, never been anywhere. There were so many things to do and her wondered why he'd never thought of them before, wondered why the rumbles and the jumps and the purple jacket had always seemed so important to him before, and now they seemed like such small things in a world he was missing, a world that was rushing past at the other end of the alley.

He felt weak and very tired.

(On the Sidewalk Bleeding, Evan Hunter)

Sample #2 (Sentences)

For example, some kinds of cold relief remedies are powders that must be mixed with hot water.

But have you ever tested your ideas?

Understanding factors that affect how quickly a substance dissolves is important to the manufacturing of medicines, dyes, and processed foods.

Understanding how substances dissolve in other substances is an important part of their job.

Based on your experience, you probably have some idea of what these are.

When you add sugar to a drink, several factors affect how quickly the sugar dissolves.

Scientists who work for drug companies do tests to ensure the powder dissolves quickly in hot water.
(Science 7, Nelson)

Understanding factors that affect how quickly a substance dissolves is important to the manufacturing of medicines, dyes, and processed foods. For example, some kinds of cold relief remedies are powders that must be mixed with hot water. Scientists who work for drug companies do tests to ensure the powder dissolves quickly in hot water. Understanding how substances dissolve in other substances is an important part of their job. When you add sugar to a drink, several factors affect how quickly the sugar dissolves. Based on your experience, you probably have some idea of what these are. But have you ever tested your ideas?

(Science 7, Nelson)

He felt weak and very tired. He felt alone and wet and feverish and chilled, and he knew he was going to die now, and the knowledge made him suddenly sad. He was not frightened. For some reason, he was not frightened. He was only filled with an overwhelming sadness that his life would be over at sixteen. He felt all at once as if he had never done anything, never seen anything, never been anywhere. There were so many things to do and he wondered why he'd never thought of them before, wondered why the rumbles and the jumps and the purple jacket had always seemed so important to him before, and now they seemed like such small things in a world he was missing, a world that was rushing past at the other end of the alley.

(*On the Sidewalk Bleeding*, Evan Hunter)