Edit for Paragraph Indentations

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

- Learn when to indent paragraphs.
- Practice editing for paragraph indentations.
- Discuss how they can apply this skill to their own independent writing.

Preparation

Materials Needed

- Chart paper and markers
- Personal Narratives Checklist
- Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation

If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the modeling and practice texts (with errors) onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson.

1. Focus

Explain Editing for Paragraph Indentations

Say: When we write personal narratives, we need to have a way to organize our writing so that our writing is clear and in order. One way we can do this is by making paragraphs when we write. Paragraphs are groups of related sentences about the same topic or idea. We can recognize paragraphs in others’ writing because of indentations. We need to make an indentation at the beginning of each new paragraph.

Model Editing for Paragraph Indentations

Display the modeling text (with errors) on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Ask students to listen as you read the passage aloud and look for errors in the writing.

Modeling Text

Read sentence 1. Say: This is the first sentence of the text, so I know we need to indent. This will show that it is the first paragraph. I can put a symbol to show that I need to indent here. (Use the traditional ¶ symbol.) Now I’ll continue reading.

Read sentences 2 through 4. Say: All of these sentences tell how the writer feels when watching the coral reef, so I know these sentences are all in the same paragraph. I’ll read on to figure out when to start the next paragraph.

Read sentence 5. Say: With this sentence, the writer is changing the action and topic. I know that this means this is the start of a new paragraph. I am going to mark the text with a paragraph symbol so I know to indent this sentence. The new paragraph begins with this sentence.
2. Rehearse

Practice Editing for Paragraph Indentations

Display the following text (with errors) on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

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I had never snorkled before. The mask made my head tilt. The flippers made it hard to walk. ¶ But I didn’t care. I was so happy to be in the water, and I got to see amazing things. My favorite sight underwater was the fish. I couldn’t believe fish came in so many different shapes, sizes, and patterns. I was dazzled by the bright colors.
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**Practice Text**

Ask students to work with a partner to read the text and decide where the paragraphs should be indented. (Students do not need to copy the paragraphs.)

**Share Paragraph Indentation Edits**

Call students together and ask volunteers to tell where the paragraph indentations go and why.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

**Say:** Good writers use paragraphs in their writing to help with organization and flow for the reader. We use paragraphs for personal narratives as well as most other types of writing.

Review the Personal Narratives Checklist (page 60) and encourage students who are at the editing stage of their independent writing to focus on paragraph indentation and other conventions of good writing. During conferences, use the prompts on your conferring flip chart to reinforce students’ editing of paragraph indentation and other errors.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to talk about their experiences editing their personal narratives for paragraph indentation and other basic writing conventions.

**Strategies to Support ELs**

**Beginning**

Support ELs’ understanding of paragraphs and indentation. Show students examples of familiar classroom texts. Point out the paragraphs in the text and note that each new paragraph is indented.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the “Practice Editing for Paragraph Indentation” partner activity.