

Paragraph Sequence – an Exercise for Geography

From General to Specific

In writing Geography papers, students struggle to organise their ideas and information into a logical sequence. They need strategies for presenting information in paragraphs and for ordering paragraphs in the best order. For instance, a paragraph often moves from a general topic sentence to specific factual statements, which are arranged in a good progression. One sentence leads to the next through a progression of key words, which keep the paragraph focused.

Exercises putting related words into a sequence from general to specific (or from largest to smallest) are helpful pre-writing activities that make students aware of this progression.

Start with a demonstration before the whole class. Present a list of five or six associated words set in a random sequence. Ask them to order the words from the most general to the most specific or from largest to smallest.

Once they understand the exercise, break them into pairs and have them work on other word groups.

Here are some samples as models. The correct sequences are below.

1. Rivers:

bend, bed, river, rocks, valley

2. Earth fault lines:

continental plate, epicentre, fault, earth quake, earth

3. Volcano:

vent, ash, crater, lava, volcano

4. Weather

flood, season, rain, forecast, climate

The correct sequences:

1. Rivers:

in sequence: valley, river, bend, bed, rocks

2. Earth fault lines:

in sequence: earth, continental plate, fault, earth quake, epicentre

3. Volcano:

in sequence: volcano, crater, vent, lava, ash

4. Weather

climate, season, forecast, rain, flood

You can generate general to specific lists as pre-writing activities for any topic the class is covering.