

WRITING DEVELOPMENT

In her book, *The Writing Revolution* Judith Hochman tells us that students' problems with reading comprehension, as well with writing essays, occur because they have not been taught systematically to write ... to which her book gives a step-by-step guide.

The Writing Development exercises here are adapted from her programme.

The Civil Rights Movement: 1965-73

18. Paragraphs I - turning notes into a paragraph

Asked to explain how successful the Civil Rights Movement was, I turn to my notes on the 1964 Civil Rights Act:

- *Ended segregation in public places & banned racial discrimination.*
 - King: called it a "second emancipation"; scholars noted a "fundamental shift" in attitudes.
 - Improved attitudes: in 1958, 44% of whites opposed Black neighbours; by 1998, just 1%.
- *Changed daily lives & access but didn't fully address economic inequalities.*

a. I turn this into a basic paragraph of three simple sentences:

"The Civil Rights Act banned segregation. It changed attitudes. It didn't address economic inequalities."
It is not going to score me many marks! SO... how might I improve this paragraph?

b. I will use the following ideas:

- i.* Start with a topic sentence introducing the idea of the paragraph
- ii.* Expand sentences by adding factual information
- iii.* Vary vocabulary
- iv.* Use subordinating conjunctions and an appositive
- v.* Explain how this information helps us evaluate the Movement's success, including proving information
- vi.* End with a concluding sentence

c. Doing all this, I might end up with a paragraph which reads:

"To explain how successful the Civil Rights Movement was, we might look first at the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which banned segregation and discrimination. It was a landmark law; King called it a 'second emancipation' and it caused a 'fundamental shift' in attitudes – in 1958, 44% of white Americans would have refused to live next to a Black neighbour; by 1998, that figure was just 1%. However, although the Act gave Black Americans their civil rights, it did not address their economic inequalities – the poverty, low pay, or poor living conditions. Thus it appears that the Act gave Black Americans rights and respect, but did not improve their circumstances."

1. Look at my revised paragraph. Identify in it the parts where I have implemented ideas *i-vi*.

2. My second paragraph deals with the Fair Housing Act, 1968. My notes read:

- *Outlawed housing discrimination.*
 - *HOWEVER segregation persisted: 1987 study found Black & white residential segregation still high due to economic & social factors.*
 - *BUT: Suburban migration improved housing: 1950, 50% of Black homes lacked flush toilets; 1980, just 6%.*

Improve the following basic paragraph using techniques *i-vi* above:

"The Fair Housing Act outlawed housing discrimination. Segregation persisted. Housing improved."

3. Write a third paragraph deals with the Voting Rights Act. My notes read:

- *Banned discriminatory voting rules →*
 - *Black voter registration in the South rose from 27% (1964) to 59% (1969).*
 - *Black local govt representation quadrupled 1962–1980; doubled local govt spending in Black communities.*
 - *White voter counter-mobilisation cancelled out Black vote.*
 - *Black turnout surpassed 60% only in Obama elections; youth turnout <30% in the 1970s.*
 - *Few Black politicians: only 10 Black Senators since 1965; Black Representatives = 1.25% of total.*

Write a third paragraph:

- Start by devising three basic sentences.
- Improve the paragraph using ideas *i-vi*.

TOP TIP: before you put a paragraph 'to bed', read it (or better still, ask someone else to read it) out loud. You will immediately catch any grammatical errors, and also realise whether its meaning is clear enough.]