Unit 8 : Analysis by Classification

Contents:

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Objectives:

After studying this Unit, a student

- knows what classification paragraphs are, and what their purposes are.

- can make an outline of classification paragraphs.

- can write effective topic sentences for classification paragraphs.

- knows how to make classification paragraphs coherent.

- can do the exercises effectively.

1. **Definition and** purposes of analysis **by classification**

      Classification analysis is a process of grouping similar objects or ideas into classes or categories on the basis of shared characteristics or of showing how a particular subject belongs to a group or class because of its characteristics. This analytical technique is seemingly similar to division analysis, but it is no% the same. Division analysis is a process of dividing a single complex thing as a whole into its components; while classification analysis is a systematic process of grouping objects or ideas that have similar characteristics into classes, kinds or types. The principle is that there can be no classification if the things to be classified are considered not similar to each other in some aspects. This mode of analysis can be found in many kinds of writing and is also used for a variety of purposes: to inform or instruct and to convince or to persuade. So using classification as an analytical technique for paragraph and essay development means that you will show how similar objects or ideas that are thought of as existing separately are logically classified into groups or classes as in the following paragraph.

     [1] *Any poem can be classified into one of three main types, according to its content and style: a lyric poem, a narrative poem, or a dramatic poem.* [2] *A lyric poem expresses the poet's feelings or emotions: that is, his personal reaction to his subject.* [3] *Odes, sonnets, elegies, and hymns are considered*

to be lyric poems. [4] On the other hand, a narrative poem, which is usually longer than a lyric poem, tells a story. [5] The writer of a narrative poem uses characters, setting and plot to develop his theme. [6] Epics, metrical romances, and ballads are three kinds of narrative poem. [7] The final kind of poem is the dramatic poem, in which the writer uses dialogue or speech to develop his theme. [8] The dialogue can be actual, as it is in the two poetic dramas, T.S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* and Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*--or it can be implied as it is in Robert Browning's dramatic monologue *My Last Duchess*. (1)

In the above paragraph, the writer classifies similar subjects, that is "any poem", into one of three types in the first sentence, which is the topic sentence. Then the writer gives his explanation of the three types of poem in sentences 2, 4, and 7, which are major support sentences, and adds more explanation about these major support sentences in sentences 3, 5, 6, and 8, which are minor support sentences.

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(1) Adapted from Davis, Katie, *Sentence Combining and Paragraph Construction*, Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1983, p.149.

2. Organization of Classification Paragraphs

Analysis by classification deals with a process of grouping subjects or ideas that are supposed to have shared characteristics into classes, groups or categories according to their common feature or quality. That is, when classifying some subjects or ideas, you should first examine their common feature or quality, and then group them or classify them into logical classes, categories or groups according to their common feature or quality. However, the common feature or quality of what you are going to classify depends on your own interest in them. For example, one instructor at RU may group his students according to their grades, while another may group them according to their style of dressing because these two instructors have different interests in the same group of students.

As mentioned earlier, the process of classification is seemingly similar to that of division. But the difference between the two is that division deals with separating a unified subject commonly thought of as "a whole unit" into different single units, while classification involves assigning subjects thought of as having some feature in common and existing separately to logical groups or classes. Thus the structure of classification paragraphs is based on the subjects and their common feature. The pattern of organization can be outlined as "A(s) is assigned to X, Y and Z (classes)," as in the following paragraph in which the writer classifies basic automobile tires into three categories according to their qualities.

[1] Any basic automobile tire, according to its quality, falls into one of three categories. [2] The most common and cheapest tire is the bias tire. [3] Like all tires, these are made of rubber, mixed with chemicals for added strength and molded to a cord base. [4] The cord fabric of bias tires runs diagonally from one rim to the other [5] The second category of tire is the belted bias tire which has essentially the same construction as the bias tire. [6] However, a belt is placed between the plies and the tread to reduce greatly the chance of puncture. [7] Radial tires are the newest and the strongest type of tire. [8] The cord fabric runs from rim to rim, straight across the tire. [9] Also all radials are belted, usually with steel, in order to make them the longest lasting and the safest. (1)

In the above paragraph, the writer indentifies the subject to be classified "Any tire" and classifies it into one of tree types, according to its quality (common feature) in the topic sentence--the first sentence. Then he identifies each type in sentences 2, 5 and 7, which are major support sentences, giving more explanation about those sentences in sentence 3, 4, 6, 8 and 9, which are minor support sentences. Notice that the subjects to be classified "Any basic automobile tire" have shared

(1) Adapted from Johnston, op.cit., p. 82.

characteristics; that is, they are all tires. Notice also that "Any basic tire" means the thing thought of as existing separately is put into any one of three categories. The outline of the above paragraph can be drawn in this way.
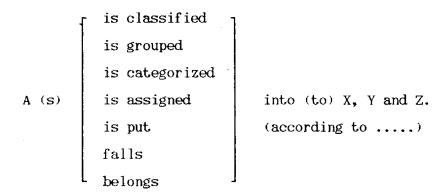
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Subject:  Any basic automobile tire (A)
          1. Bias tires (X)
              1.1. additional detail
              1.2. additional detail
          2. Belted bias tires (Y)
              2.1. additional detail
              2.2. additional detail
          3. Radial tires (Z)
              3.1. additional detail
              3.2. additional detail
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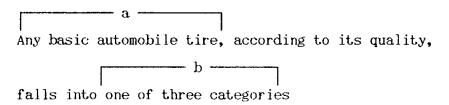## 3. Language useful for the topic sentences of classification paragraphs

Like division paragraphs, the topic sentence of a classification paragraph is based on the result of a "what" question. The question may be "What axe its classes, groups or categories?" or "To what classes, groups or categories are the subjects assigned?" The response to such a question becomes the main idea of the paragraph. The topic sentence can be written by using some verbs such as the following:

$$\text{A (s)} \quad \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{is classified} \\ \text{is grouped} \\ \text{is categorized} \\ \text{is assigned} \\ \text{is put} \\ \text{falls} \\ \text{belongs} \end{array} \right\} \quad \begin{array}{l} \text{into (to) X, Y and Z.} \\ \text{(according to .....)} \end{array}$$

In your topic sentence, remember to include (a) what are you going to classify and (b) the number (one, two, three etc.) and names of classes or categories because these elements are important points to be discussed in your paragraph.

Example:

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        ┌──────── a ────────┐
Any basic automobile tire, according to its quality,

        ┌──────── b ────────┐
falls into one of three categories
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4. Coherence in classification paragraphs

Like division paragraphs, the way to achieve coherence in classification paragraphs is to put all details in a clear logical order; that is, chronological order or arranging from the most important to the least important or vice-versa. However, you should keep in mind that in the case that all classes or categories have equal importance, you should arrange the major support

sentences in the order of the most obvious class to least obvious. Transition markers indicating numerical order or sequence may also be necessary in this kind of paragraph and essay writing.

To sum up
1. Analysis by division involves a process of putting things with shared characteristics regarded as existing separately into logical classes or categories.
2. The purpose of this kind of writing is to inform or instruct and to convince or to persuade the reader how things are classified.
3. The organization can be outlined in the same way as division paragraphs.
4. Coherence can also be achieved in the same way as in division paragraphs.

5. Exercises about classification paragraphs

Exercise 1.

Directions: Each of the following topics is suitable for classification paragraph writing. Write effective topic sentences with these topics in the spaces provided. The first one is done as an example.

Topic: Schools in Thailand.

Topic sentenec: Any school in Thailand can be classified into one of two groups, according to its administration: government schools and private schools.

Topic: People in Thai society

Topic sentence: _____

_____

Topic: Academic degrees in general

Topic sentence: _____

_____

Topic: Government universities in Thailand

Topic sentence: _____

_____

Topic: Transportation in Thailand

Topic sentence: _____

_____

Topic: Types of student

Topic sentence: _____

_____

Topic: Seasons in Thailand

Topic sentence: _____

_____

Topic: Domestic animals

Topic sentence: _____

_____

Exercise 2.

Directions: The following sentences are suitable topic sentences
           for classification paragraphs. Each is accompanied by
           additional details suitable for major support sen-
           tences. Write major support sentences for each of
           them in the spaces provided by using the additional
           details given. The first one is done as an example.

Topic sentence: There are two kinds of medicine in Thailand, which can be classified according to their basic products.

Additional
details:
  1. traditional herbal medicine
  2. modern scientific medicine

Major support sentences:
  1. Herbal medicines are produced from natural products
  2. Modern medicines are man-made

Topic sentence: Any person involved in government may be classified into one of two groups, according to his duty.

Additional
details:
  1. politician
  2. government official

Major support
sentences:
  1. _____
  _____
  _____
  2. _____
  _____
  _____

Topic sentence: Any teacher, as a grader, may be classified into one of two types.

Additional
details:
[1. hard grader
  2. easy grader

Major support
sentences:
[1. _____
     _____
     _____
  2. _____
     _____
     _____

Topic sentence: Any career opportunity for people falls into one of two groups because of its administration.

Additional
details:
[1. business
  2. government

Major support
sentences:
[1. _____
     _____
     _____
  2. _____
     _____
     _____

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Topic sentence : Any instructor in the English Department at RU may be classified into one of three groups, according to his field of study.

Additional
details:
    1. those who teach general English
    2. those who teach linguistics
    3. those who teach literature

Major support
sentences:

1. _____

_____

_____

2. _____

_____

_____

3. _____

_____

_____

Topic sentence: Any disease is one of two kinds, according to its nature: infectious and noninfectious.

Additional
details:
    1. spread by close contact
    2. not transmitted

Major support
sentences:

1. _____

_____

_____

2. _____

_____

_____

Exercise 3.

Directions: Read the following two paragraphs. Consider their organization; then write an outline for each paragraph in the spaces provided.

Paragraph 1.

An engineer belongs to any one of three main groups, according to his field of study. The first group includes civil engineers. This kind of engineer knows and understands how to plan and construct roads, bridges, railroads and so on. The second group includes mechanical engineers. This group is interested in the designs and the materials which are used in the construction of various kinds of machinery. The final group includes electrical engineers. This group understands the generation and the transmission of electrical energy.

Write your outline of the above paragraph here.

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Paragraph 2.

Any flowering plant may be classified into one of three groups according to their period of life: annuals, biennials and perennials. Annuals normally live only one year. Examples of annuals are cornflowers and marigolds. Biennials live for two years after the seeds are planted and bloom well only in the second year. Common biennials are foxgloves and hollyhocks. Perennials may live for many years. The flowers in this group begin blooming the year after they are planted. Perennial flowers include roses and violets (1)

Write your outline of the above paragraph here.

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_____

(1) Adapted from Huizenga, op.cit., p. 203.

Exercise 4.

Directions: The following is an outline of a classification para-
            graph. Consider it carefully, then write your com-
            plete paragraph in the spaces provided based on the
            information given.

Subject: A linguist's interests (A)

    1. Descriptive linguistics (X)

      1.1. Describing contemporary language

          ╴ the sounds, words and sentences of any language

    2. Historical linguistics (Y)

      2.1. Investigating the history of a language

          ╴ the development of Castilian Spanish from Latin

    3. Comparative linguistics (Z)

      3.1. Finding the similarities and differences between
         languages

          ╴ the comparison of Castilian and South American
          Spanish.

Write your paragraph here.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____