



Paragraph Manipulatives

How can we get students to physically interact with language?

Try using paragraph manipulatives. This flexible strategy can be used across the curriculum, and provides a practical way to introduce or review information and ideas. Many teachers are surprised by the explicit thinking they observe when students in small groups discuss options for organizing manipulatives.

Other possible manipulatives activities include putting in order a cause and/or effect paragraph or a comparison and/or contrast paragraph. When practicing topic or concluding sentences with students, some teachers like to provide completed manipulatives with supporting details and have students write their own sentences on blank manipulatives. There are hundreds of possible uses for this type of language activity that calls on students to practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

STEP 1

CHOOSE THE PARAGRAPH.

Write or find a paragraph that can be altered as a word document. Consider using paragraphs from the class's current texts if students need to review content.

STEP 2

CREATE THE PARAGRAPH MANIPULATIVES.

Separate the paragraph into sentences so that, instead of flowing from one sentence to the next, each sentence is on its own line.

Print out the document, and cut the sentences into strips with one sentence on each strip.

Make one set for each group that will work together. Put the strips into envelopes to keep them together.

STEP 3

DISTRIBUTE THE MANIPULATIVES.

Give the strips to students and have them work together to construct a paragraph in a manner that makes sense.

EXAMPLE

Full Paragraph:

There are many benefits to getting regular exercise. First of all, it can help you to build muscles and maintain a healthy weight. Similarly, exercising is good for your heart and overall health. Also, exercise can help to clear your mind of worries or stress. Finally, if you exercise with other people or play a team sport, you can develop valuable relationships and strengthen your emotional well-being. In conclusion, every person should find time each day to do something physically active.



SENTENCE MANIPULATIVES FROM PARAGRAPH

There are many benefits to getting regular exercise.

First of all, it can help you to build muscles and maintain a healthy weight.

Similarly, exercising is good for your heart and overall health.

Also, exercise can help to clear your mind of worries or stress.

Finally, if you exercise with other people or play a team sport, you can develop valuable relationships and strengthen your emotional well-being.

In conclusion, every person should find time each day to do something physically active.



Keryn Kwedor, Landmark High School, created this example of a paragraph manipulative activity. A version of it appears in Landmark Outreach's free e-resources, *Spotlight on Language-Based Teaching*.