Paragraph types: Classification

In a **classification** paragraph, separate items are grouped into categories according to shared characteristics. Depending on the subject, you may be asked to classify people, organisms, things or ideas.

Topic sentence identifies what is to be classified and the categories used.
Support Sentences give more information about each of the categories.
Concluding Sentence (optional)

Useful transitional words and phrases

- can be divided, can be classified, can be categorised
- the first/second/third type, the first/second third category

Examples of questions requiring a classification paragraph.

- How are faults classified?
- Describe the chemical classification of hormones giving two examples of each.
- How did Malinowski classify folktales?
- How can the Hindu population of India be classified?

Sample paragraph 1

How did Malinowski classify folktales?

Malinowski proposed a three-way classification for folktales and distinguished between myth, legend and fairy story. The first of these, he suggested, represents a statement of a higher and more important truth of a primeval reality. As such, it is regarded as sacred. Fairy stories, on the other hand, are simply entertainment. Nobody attaches any special significance to them, and nobody believes them to be true. Legends, however, are believed to be true historical accounts.

Sample paragraph 2

How can the Hindu population of India be classified?

The whole Hindu population of India can be divided into four castes or varna. The highest of these castes is that of the Brahmans or priests. The next highest is the varna of the warriors, known as the Kshatriya, or sometimes the Rajput caste. Below this comes the Vaishya or merchant caste and the lowest caste is known as the Sudra caste. While castes are traditionally associated with a type of occupation, in modern India, occupations are not a reliable guide to caste.