

Paragraph types: Description

A **description** paragraph is required when you are asked to write about how something looks, sound, smells, tastes or feels. You should provide specific details of the most important features and use appropriate adjectives to describe attributes and qualities.

Topic Sentence identifies the phenomenon to be described

Support Sentences give an organised description of its parts, functions and characteristics

Ways of sequencing include the following:

- from left to right
- from most important features to least important features
- from main characteristics to minor details.

Concluding Sentence (usually unnecessary)

Useful transitional words and phrases

in the foreground, in the middle distance, in the background, in the far distance, next to, near, up, down, between, above, below, on top of, beneath, left right, centre, front, back, middle, in the interior, on the exterior, on the inside, on the outside, surrounding

Examples of questions requiring a *description* paragraph

Describe the main features of *Heteronema*.

Describe the major characteristics of obsessive compulsive disorder

Describe a single-dish radiotelescope.

Describe the castle at Vincennes.

Describe the main features of the lemur.



Sample paragraph 1

Describe the main features of *Heteronema*.

Heteronema is a flagellate protozoan. It is spindle-shaped 65 microns in length and 10 microns in diameter. At the anterior end there is a reservoir and the two flagella arise in it. The single nucleus is egg-shaped and lies near the centre of the body. There is a contractile vacuole near the reservoir, and there are several large paramylon bodies scattered through the body.

Sample paragraph 2

Describe the main features of the *lemur*.

The lemur has a moist nose and a cleft upper lip. It has a striking foxlike muzzle and a good sense of smell. Most lemurs have nails on the fingers and toes, except for the second toe, which bears a claw. This is called the 'toilet claw,' because it is used in grooming. Lemurs also groom their fur with the tongue and the lower front teeth, which slant outward almost horizontally. Generally speaking, lemurs and their relatives are small mammals with thick or woolly hair and large eyes. Some have long bushy tails; others, rat-like tails; a few, only a stub.

Sample paragraph 3

Describe the major characteristics of obsessive compulsive disorder.

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is a severe and disabling clinical condition. It usually begins in late adolescence or early adulthood. OCD is characterised by obsessive thoughts that continue regardless of efforts that are made by the sufferer to challenge the behaviours. People with OCD frequently perform tasks repetitively because they are seeking relief from the anxiety that is created by their obsession. Some common compulsions that sufferers may have include counting specific things (such as money, footsteps, letters), repeatedly washing their hands, continually clearing their throats, persistently ensuring that certain items are in a straight line, repeatedly check that their parked cars have been locked before leaving them, constantly organising things in a certain way, turning lights on and off, opening and closing doors, touching objects a set number of times before exiting a room, walking in a certain routine by stepping on a certain colour or shape of floor tile. The strength of the observed addiction or compulsion leads to a diagnosis of the disorder.