

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 League in the 1920s

11. Paragraphs - turning points into a paragraph

Let's say I have been asked to write the essay on the successes and failure of the League in the 1920s I decide to make: **4. Bulgaria 1925** my first paragraph, and I turn to my notes:

4. **BULGARIA, 1925** (*Stray Dog War*)
- Greek Captain shot retrieving dog → Greece invaded Bulgaria.
 - Bulgaria appealed to League.
 - League ordered Greece to withdraw.
 - They did, but complained.

a. I summarise these into a 'basic paragraph' of three simple sentences:

"War broke out in Bulgaria. Greece invaded Bulgaria. Greece withdrew when the League told it to."

It is not going to score me many marks! SO... how might I improve this paragraph?

b. To improve the paragraph, I will use Judith Hochman's ideas:

- Start with a topic sentence introducing the idea of the paragraph
- Expand sentences by adding factual information
- Vary vocabulary
- Use conjunctions
- Explain how this information addresses the question, including proving information
- End with a concluding sentence which directly answers the question

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

"We can gauge the effectiveness of the League from the Bulgarian crisis of 1925. The war (often called 'Stray Dog War') erupted after a Greek Captain was shot while trying to retrieve his dog, which had run across the border. In retaliation, the Greeks invaded Bulgaria and occupied the town of Petrich – although the Bulgarians did not fight back, but appealed to the League. The League ordered Greece to withdraw, which the Greeks did. Thus we can see the League stopping a very minor border incident, which had only cost one life ... and without addressing the underlying tensions (because the Greeks complained bitterly about the decision)."

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

This is a **really good way** to write an essay:

- Choose the topic for a paragraph.
- Write a 'basic paragraph' of three simple sentences.
- Improve the paragraph using ideas **i-vi**.

2. Using this approach, write the rest of the essay:

'How successful was the League in resolving conflicts in the 1920s?'

writing paragraphs on: The Aaland isalnds; Upper Silesia; Vilna and Corfu, using the notes on the webpage:

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.]