

# PARAGRAPH PRACTICE



*with*

**GREEK  
MYTHS**

**SAMPLE**

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## Paragraph Practice with Greek Myths

### Lesson 1

#### Checklist

- Read pages 1-2 of the Student Worktext for an introduction to this unit.
- Read the Study Notes for this lesson.
- Read “Greek Storytelling” on pages 138-139 of *Greek Myths* by Jean Menzies.<sup>1</sup>
- Record any new vocabulary words with their pronunciations and definitions in the vocabulary section below or on notebook paper.
- Complete the dictation in the section below or on notebook paper, and make any necessary corrections.
- Complete the writing assignment.

#### Study Notes

What is a myth, anyway? We often use the word to mean something that is widely believed but factually untrue, like the claim that we only use 10% of our brains or that Albert Einstein failed math in grade school. However, in the study of literature, *myth* has a more exact definition. A myth is a traditional story that explains something about nature, society, or human experience.

Myths serve many purposes in the cultures that create them. They provide an imaginative explanation for the origins of things in nature, such as constellations or rainbows. They explain how certain features of society, such as festivals or other traditions, came to be. Myths can also help people understand and accept aspects of the human experience like suffering, love, and hope. Although myths may seem fanciful, their main purpose is to pass on a community’s understanding of the world in a memorable way.

Have you ever wondered how we know about the beliefs of people who lived thousands of years ago? In today’s reading, we’ll learn about some of the ways that the ancient Greeks passed on their stories so that we can enjoy them today.

#### Vocabulary

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<sup>1</sup> All of the readings in this unit come from this book, so I won’t list the title and the author every time.

Are any of the words in today's reading new to you? Look them up at [merriam-webster.com](http://merriam-webster.com) or in a paper dictionary, then write each word and its definition on the lines below or on a piece of notebook paper. Add the pronunciation if it's unfamiliar.

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## Dictation

For this and all the following dictations, work with your instructor. If you need more room to write, use a piece of notebook paper. Your dictations should be written by hand unless your instructor tells you otherwise.

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## Writing

You've probably written paragraphs before—perhaps *a lot* of paragraphs! But can you tell me what a paragraph is? How would you define the word *paragraph*? Here's how I like to explain it:

**A paragraph is a group of related sentences about one idea.**

Standard paragraphs have three parts:

1. **A topic sentence**
2. **One or more body sentences (sometimes called supporting sentences)**
3. **A concluding sentence**

**The topic sentence tells what the paragraph is about.** Remember: a paragraph is about one idea. That idea appears right at the beginning of the paragraph, in the topic sentence.

**The body or supporting sentence(s) explain the idea in the topic sentence or provide more information about it.** Body sentences follow the topic sentence. Paragraphs *can* have a single body sentence, but that's unusual. Most have two, three, or more.

**The concluding sentence sums up the paragraph.** It can restate the main point of the paragraph, summarize the contents of the paragraph, or draw a conclusion about the topic. Sometimes the concluding sentence will indicate the importance or relevance of a topic as well.

Now that you know the definition of a paragraph and understand its parts, let's look at an example of a basic paragraph—one you've already read, in fact!<sup>2</sup>

**Myths serve many purposes in the cultures that create them. They provide an imaginative explanation for the origins of things in nature, such as constellations or rainbows. They explain how certain features of society, such as festivals or other traditions, came to be. Myths can also help people understand and accept aspects of the human experience like suffering, love, and hope. Although myths may seem fanciful, their main purpose is to pass on a community's understanding of the world in a memorable way.**

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<sup>2</sup> If you don't recognize this paragraph, go back and read the Study Notes! 😊

Can you identify the three parts of this paragraph? Using three different colored pencils or highlighters, mark the topic sentence, body sentences, and concluding sentence.

Next, let's construct a simple five-sentence paragraph based on today's reading. Read the following sentences and mark the topic sentence with a **T**, each body sentence with a **B**, and the concluding sentence with a **C**. Then arrange the sentences in logical order and rewrite them as a complete paragraph on the lines provided on the next page or on a sheet of notebook paper.

\_\_\_\_\_ In addition, ancient authors passed down the myths by writing plays and poems based on them.

\_\_\_\_\_ The ancient Greeks passed down their myths in several ways.

\_\_\_\_\_ We know about the myths today mainly from ancient Greek writing and art.

\_\_\_\_\_ Visual artists like sculptors and potters also used mythological figures and scenes in their work.

\_\_\_\_\_ One of the main ways the ancient Greeks shared myths among themselves was by storytelling.



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- Complete the writing assignment.

### Study Notes

*Read the Study Notes in the Student Worktext with your student.*

### Reading

*Read the day’s text with your student.*

### Vocabulary

*Use this section to note down any new vocabulary words you want your student to look up.*

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<sup>3</sup> All of the readings in this unit come from this book, so the title and the author will not be listed every time.

## Dictation

Although often overlooked as a pedagogical tool, dictation plays an important role in writing instruction. Because working memory is limited,<sup>4</sup> novice writers often “lose their place” mentally while trying to compose sentences, derailing the writing process. Dictation requires students to divide sentences into meaningful units—a process called “chunking”—to make them easier for working memory to handle. With practice, students are able to hold phrases and sentences of increasing length in their heads long enough to write them down.

Here is the process for doing dictation:

1. Read the entire dictation passage aloud as the student listens.
2. Read it again, sentence by sentence, and ask the student to repeat each sentence back to you. If the student cannot repeat a full sentence, break the sentence down into phrases.
3. Read the passage a third time as the student writes it down, sentence by sentence or, if necessary, phrase by phrase.
4. Read the passage one last time, as the student checks to make sure that all the words they’ve written appear in the right order with correct capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Read in a clear voice, at close to your normal reading pace, using pauses and intonation to indicate punctuation:

- Comma: one beat
- Period: two beats
- Question mark: rising tone
- Exclamation point: emphatic tone
- Direct quotation: change voice slightly when reading quotation

Today’s dictation passage is a single sentence from today’s reading. (Passages will increase in length as the unit progresses.)

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<sup>4</sup> Early research estimated working memory limits to be five to nine chunks, but more recent studies have shown a limit of three or four chunks when the information is unfamiliar:  
<https://evidencebased.education/how-limited-is-working-memory-capacity/>



**Painted pots, known as vases, allowed the ancient Greeks to have pictures from the myths in their own homes.**

If your student is struggling to hold the whole sentence in their head, break the it down into phrases as follows:

**Painted pots,  
known as vases,  
allowed the ancient Greeks  
to have pictures  
from the myths  
in their own homes.**

If your student's dictation has any errors, correct them and repeat the dictation process. You may want to add any misspelled words to your student's spelling list. You can also use dictations to assess their understanding of punctuation and capitalization, providing review and reinforcement for any areas of weakness. With time and practice, your student's facility with dictation will improve.

## **Writing**

### *Paragraph Structure*

Today's writing lesson begins with some basic definitions:

**A paragraph is a group of related sentences about one idea.**

**The three parts of a standard paragraph:**

- 1. A topic sentence**
- 2. One or more body sentences (sometimes called supporting sentences)**
- 3. A concluding sentence**

**The topic sentence tells what the paragraph is about.**

**The body or supporting sentence(s) explain the idea in the topic sentence or provide more information about it.**

**The concluding sentence can do one of three things: restate the main**

**point of the paragraph, summarize the contents of the paragraph, or draw a conclusion about the topic.**

Be sure that your child understands these terms and their definitions, as they will be referred to again and again throughout this unit.

Students are next asked to identify the three parts of a paragraph in a model drawn from today's Study Notes. In the paragraph below, the topic sentence appears in **bold type**, the body sentences are underlined, and the concluding sentence appears in *italic type*.

**Myths serve many purposes in the cultures that create them.** They provide an imaginative explanation for the origins of things in nature, such as constellations or rainbows. They explain how certain features of society, such as festivals or other traditions, came to be. Myths can also help people understand and accept aspects of the human experience like suffering, love, and hope. *Although myths may seem fanciful, their main purpose is to pass on a community's understanding of the world in a memorable way.*

Next, students are asked to identify sentences by type and label them.

T=topic sentence; B=body sentence; C=concluding sentence

  B   In addition, ancient authors passed down the myths by writing plays and poems based on them.

  T   The ancient Greeks passed down their myths in several ways.

  C   We know about the myths today mainly from ancient Greek writing and art.

  B   Visual artists like sculptors and potters also used mythological figures and scenes in their work.

  B   One of the main ways the ancient Greeks shared myths among themselves was by storytelling.

Finally, students are asked to arrange the sentences in a logical order and rewrite them as a complete paragraph:

**The ancient Greeks passed down their myths in several ways. One of the main ways the ancient Greeks shared myths among themselves was by storytelling. In addition, ancient authors passed down the myths by writing plays and poems based on them. Visual artists like sculptors and potters also used mythological figures and scenes in their work. We know about the myths today mainly from ancient Greek writing and art.**

Note: This arrangement keeps related topics—oral storytelling and written work—together. Your child may choose a different order.

If your child struggles with this assignment, first review the definitions in the Writing section of the Student Worktext to be sure they understand the different roles of sentences in a paragraph. Next, refer them back to the text and point out the three white banner headings on pages 138-139. These headings correspond to the three body sentences. A version of the concluding sentence is found at the bottom of page 139.

If your student is still unable to complete the assignment, they likely need more explicit instruction in paragraph structure before proceeding with this unit. Refer to an explicit writing curriculum like *Write By Number* or *Writing with Ease 3* for assistance.