

L.O. Develop paragraphing to structure my writing

When we write a scene, it is very important that we help our reader to 'see' the events as we want them to. What's the point of imagining a great story, if the reader can't experience it the same way as us?

We need to 'signpost' our text, to guide the reader: sometimes we want them to see lots of details and get a feel for the environment, so we might use lots of powerful description. At other times, we want the reader to feel the excitement of an action scene, so the sentences we use need to be short and punchy.

Whichever we use, the reader needs to know *when* these things are happening, and this is done with careful **paragraphing**.

Every time we want to our reader to 'look' at something different, we need a new paragraph:

A descriptive passage about a forest scene is followed by a sudden movement in the shadows - new paragraph

The eyes of a troll stare with a burning intensity, then the Big Billy Goat lowers his head - new paragraph

Red Riding Hood asks a question, and 'Grandma' answers - new paragraph

Movie directors do exactly the same as authors, by using different camera angles for specific effects and to guide the viewer around their scene:



- **close-ups** - to show descriptive detail, facial expressions, close action etc., often short, used in quick succession to increase tension
- **Medium & long shots** - these show a wide view of a scene, so the viewer can see general details and action
- **Panning shots** (the camera moves across the scene) - longer shots, that take in lots of detail, often used in low-tension sections or during the slow build-up of tension

Look at the written text of the scene you are about to watch.

Once you have read the text, work with a partner to **circle each paragraph and annotate it**, to show the camera angle that might have been used in the film and summarise what the camera would be pointing at for that paragraph.

How have the paragraphs helped you to 'see' the scene in your imagination?



As the film clip is played, watch it with the text in mind - how close were you with your camera angle estimations? Also, look carefully at just how many shots it takes to make up just one minute of film.



As you continue your flashback story, keep in mind your 'camera shots'. if you are not sure about where to begin a new paragraph, ask yourself, "Is this the start of a new action? Do I want my reader to look at something else? Is someone new talking? What is my 'camera' pointing at now?" Some paragraphs are quite long (the descriptive ones), but most are short, because lots of different things can happen in a scene.

OK, let's get writing!