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Teaching Writing: from Sentence to Paragraph

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US Embassy Tokyo

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This webinar will help you learn how to approach teaching writing in a systematic way while also addressing the cultural considerations behind teaching writing in Japan.

This session will:

1. discuss the cultural considerations of teaching a western style of writing to Japanese students
2. identify how to use the CEFR to order writing tasks
3. break down the steps of teaching the paragraph-writing process



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Today's Topics

- the cultural framework of teaching writing in Japan
- the CEFR order of writing tasks
- sentence-level activities
- the steps of the paragraph-writing process



Discussion Question

In the chatbox, please briefly respond to this question:

How do your students **feel about** or **respond to** learning the "western" approach of academic writing?



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Set the tone

- You are teaching your students how to be **culturally flexible**.
- The western style of writing is ONE approach that they will need to know to be successful in an international context.
- The Japanese style is not wrong or inferior.
- You're giving students "tools in their toolbox."



Different tools



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the
CEFR

The **C**ommon **E**uropean **F**ramework of **R**eference for Languages

A1 → C2 (<A1, A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2)

CEFR-J

Where are your students on the CEFR?



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Supercharge your teaching today

The GSE Teacher Toolkit helps you find coursebooks, dictionaries and grammar books appropriate for your

Global Scale of English

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- Using the GSE
- Learning Objectives
- Teacher Toolkit
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What is the Global Scale of English?

The Global Scale of English (GSE) is the first truly global English language standard, designed to help teachers to more accurately and easily measure learner progress.

Based on research involving over 6000 teachers from more than 50 countries, it breaks down the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) by pinpointing on a scale of 0 to 90 what needs to be mastered for the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing within a CEFR level, using a more granular approach.

These resources then help teachers select the right learning objectives, and the vocabulary required for their learners to move onto the next level.

They also help with the difficulty of selecting the right lesson, course materials or the right time.

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Use the Global Scale of English in your classroom with our GSE Teacher Toolkit.

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Order of objectives

The Global Scale of English (GSE)

[english.com/gse](https://www.english.com/gse)

Learning Objectives



Overview



Young Learners
(6-14 years)



Adult
(Academic
English)

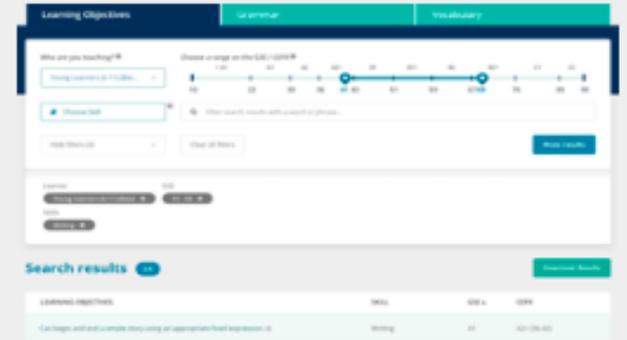


Adult
(General English)



Professional
English
(Business/Vocational
English)

These can also be accessed
through the free GSE
Teacher Toolkit



[Learn more](#)

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Common Writing Goal:
Students can write a paragraph with a topic sentence, supporting details, and a concluding sentence.

CEFR Level?
B1 (Eiken Level 2)



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What does this tell us as teachers?

If our students aren't **consistently** and **successfully** writing at a B1 level, the goal of writing a full academic paragraph **isn't realistic**.

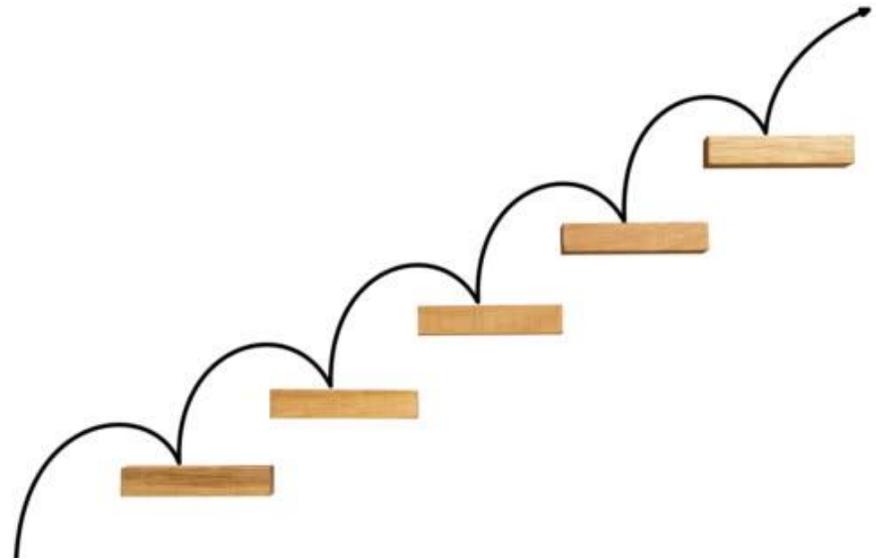
i + 1 Theory: students need an **accessible** challenge

If a task is too difficult, then **they will struggle** to meet the objective.



So what now?

- assess your students' CEFR level
- start **below B1** and work up to it
- **scaffold** your tasks carefully
- start with tasks at $i+1$ so that students can succeed



Goal: Students can write a paragraph with a topic sentence, supporting details, and a concluding sentence. B1

Can write simple sentences about personal interests	27	A1
Can write simple sentences about someone's life and routines.	28	A1
Can write simple sentences about a familiar object.	29	A1
Can write simple sentences about what they and other people do.	30	A2
Can write very short, simple sentences about their feelings.	32	A2



Goal: Students can write a paragraph with a topic sentence, supporting details, and a concluding sentence. **B1**

Can write short descriptive texts (4-6 sentences) on familiar personal topics (e.g. family, possessions), given a model.	34	A2
Can write about everyday things (e.g. people, places, job, study) in linked sentences.	41	A2+
Can write a basic paragraph containing a topic sentence and related details, if provided with a model.	45	B1
Can write the concluding sentence or sentences of a basic paragraph, given a model.	46	B1
Can write a strong topic sentence within a clear paragraph.	59	B2

CEFR Summary

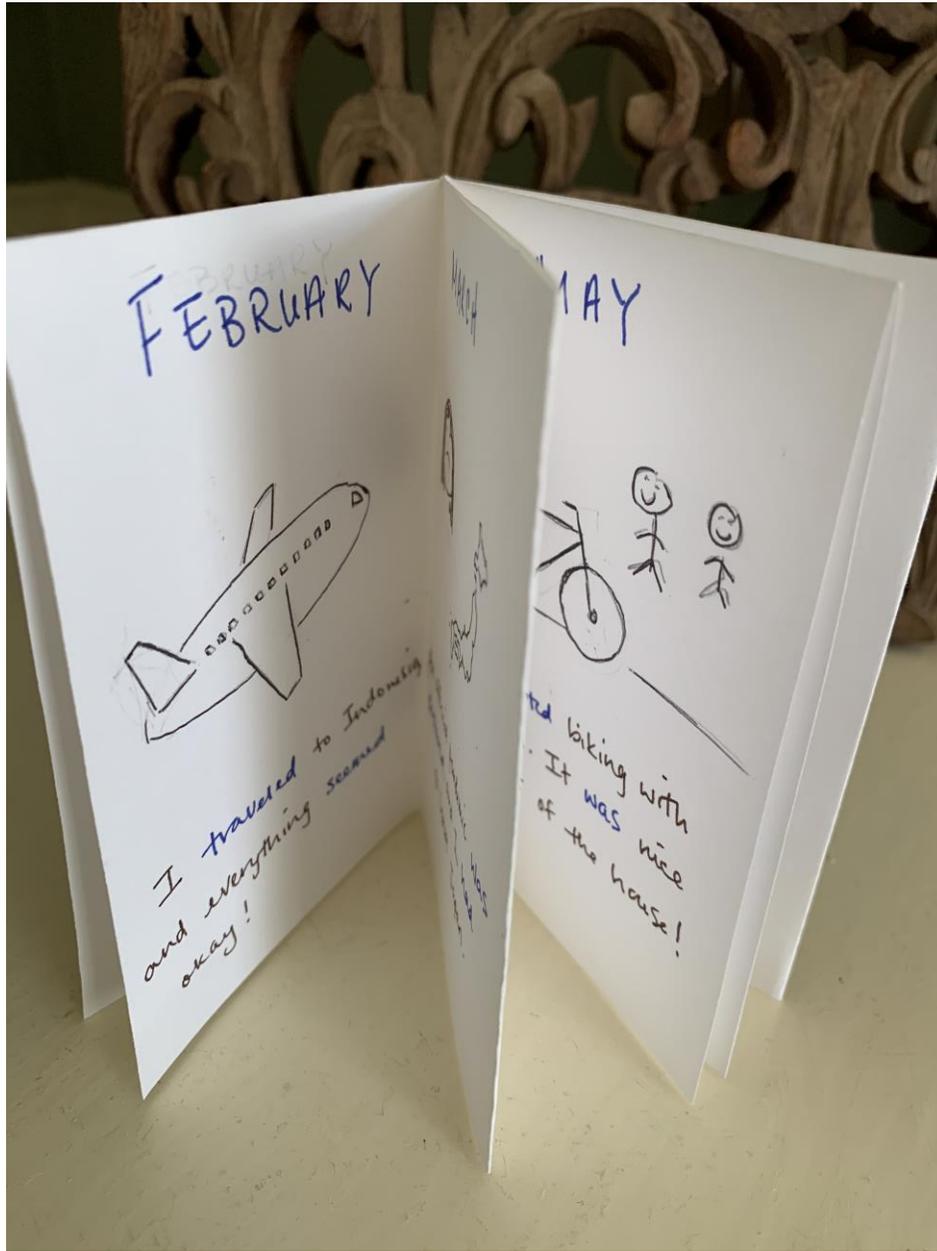
- start with sentences until students are **confident**
- have students write about **familiar** topics
- when ready, start “the paragraph” with familiar topics
- when they can consistently/easily write a paragraph about familiar topic, **increase the difficulty** of topic



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Mini-book

- encourages creativity
- low-tech
- can be used for show-and-tell (speaking)
- easy to do



Padlet

- done for HW → discussed in class
- encourages creative expression
- interactive

padlet

@jlselvidge + 9 3h
Show-and-Tell (Aug.18-19)
Tell us about your item!

Airpods
I go everywhere with this. I like very much listening to music. This is one of my favorite things.
1 comment
@jlselvidge 3h What kind of music do you like to listen to?
Add comment

This is my Ping Pong paddle.
I bought it at the Paddle.place store. I pay it \$160. I used it when i play pp. It's very good for me. This is very expensive for me

1 comment
@jlselvidge 1d \$160??? That's a lot of money!
Add comment

My girlfriend gift
This is a gift that my girlfriend give to me. I always have it with me. Makes me very happy. I really miss her.

1 comment
@jlselvidge 1d That is very sweet!
Add comment

My Hand Sanitizer
I love to take it everywhere to stay clean. I bought it from walmart a week ago. I used to use it since quarantines began. I will going to use it all the time. It's very important for everyone and love it.

1 comment
@jlselvidge 1d Sanitizer is so important now! :)
Add comment

My graduation gift
This plushy is my favorite household item. I received this item from my best friend. This was given to me during my graduation. I really love it.

1 comment
@jlselvidge 1d It's so cute!
Add comment

my coffee cup
This coffee cup its special for me. I give the other cup to my boyfriend. It was in valentine's day. His coffee cup say " I love weird" and mine says "I am weird". Both love coffee. So is super special and cute.

1 comment
@jlselvidge 1d I love that mug. :)
Add comment

My Red Sox hat
I take this hat everywhere. I got it in Boston. I used to live there. It makes me happy!


My Yellow hat
I take this hat everywhere. My Grandma made for me when I was just a baby. I wear this hat on winter time. It made me warm.

1 comment
@jlselvidge 1d That's such a special gift. :)
Add comment

My hand soap
I love to take hand soap to everywhere.its importanat to use all the time to stay clean.TO SAVE your self and others.
Add comment

My favorite shirt
This is my favorite shirt. It's says Honduras. My friends sent it to me from Honduras. I like this color. I really like the fabric it is made of. When I use it, I feel close to my country.

1 comment
@jlselvidge 1d I love that color of blue!
Add comment

Don't rush through the sentence-
level stage.

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Paragraph-Writing Process



Topic

- spend time brainstorming possible topics
- get as many ideas as possible
- journal writing
- think-pair-share
- get them speaking!

Topic Sentence

- What do you want to say about the topic?
- One topic can have many different topic sentences.
- Option: give the class one topic and have them choose their own topic sentence.

Topic: Climate Change

Topic Sentences:

- Climate change is rapidly increasing.
- Climate change has caused significant changes in temperatures worldwide.
- Climate change is responsible for an increase in natural disasters.
- Climate change is nothing new.

Plan Ideas

- visual map / outline
- discuss difference between major details and minor details
- give color-coded models

Baseball is a very popular sport in Japan for people of all ages. First, little children love to play. On weekends, parks are full of children and teenagers playing organized baseball in competitions. Little kids also play for fun with their friends. Also, adults like to play baseball. There are many clubs that adult men can play in throughout Japan. They have friendly competitions with other teams. Finally, people of all ages like to watch the professional baseball teams play, both in person and on television. For example, thousands of people, adults and children, go to the Tokyo Dome to see the Giants play.

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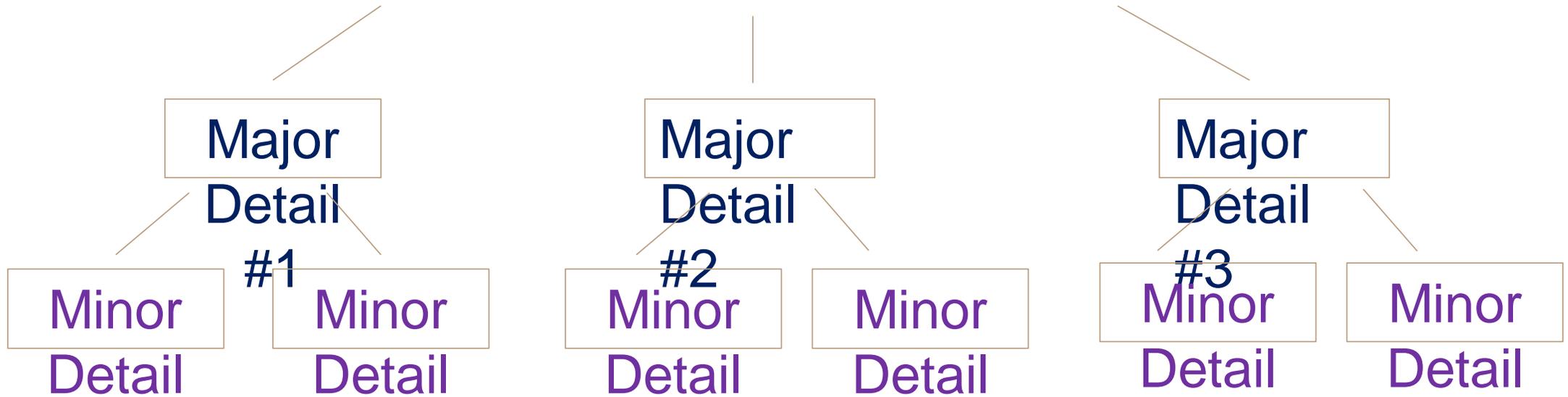
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Topic Sentence



Spend TIME on Planning Stage

- this is where the ideas get solidified
- give feedback (in-person/online)
- check for linear reasoning
- Assessment: clear organization and sufficient/clear ideas



Write Paragraph w/o Concluding Sentence

write only
topic
sentence +
supporting
details

Assessment
: content,
organization
, vocabulary,
grammar
(focused)

Final step: Teach the Concluding Sentence

Why? Research shows it's higher on the difficulty scale.

(Paraphrasing, synonyms, word order, etc.)

1. Give **examples** of how to paraphrase a topic sentence.
Baseball is a very popular sport in Japan. → Japanese people love the game of baseball.
2. Give **practice** paraphrasing sample topic sentences.
3. Then students go back to their paragraph and add a concluding sentence.



Repeat

- Have students write multiple paragraphs throughout the year so they become comfortable and confident.
- If they can write a paragraph, they can write an essay.





Wrap-up

- create an environment that considers English writing as ONE useful alternative
- use the CEFR to recognize where your students are beginning and where they need to go
- break down the steps of the process and don't rush through them

Questions?

References

- <https://www.pearson.com/english/about/gse/learning-objectives.html>
- Krashen, Stephen D. *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. Prentice-Hall International, 1987.

