EXPLANATION:

One method of development which may be employed in discussing a topic is the use of facts. A fact may be defined as something which is capable of being verified. It is thus distinguished from an opinion. "It is 32 F today," "Ohio became a state in 1803," and "Mr McLaughlin was born in County Mayo, Ireland," are all statements of fact. Each one can be checked to determine its veracity. "It is nice today," "Ohio is a beautiful state," and "Mr McLaughlin is an ill-tempered man" are, on the other hand, statements of opinion.

Facts may be used to explain, describe, narrate, or argue. Care must be taken to be certain that statements of fact are accurate, relevant, and sufficient. When opinions are expressed, the facts on which they are based should be indicated. It is likewise important to distinguish between objective and subjective language. Saying that something is "interesting," "beautiful," "memorable," "difficult," and the like is to employ subjective language. It involves personal interpretation or reaction. Objective language, on the other hand, employs words which are impersonal, non-judgmental, detached, impartial, and unbiased. For example, the expressions "brown hair and blue eyes," "yellow flowers against a green background," and "three silver spoons" use objective words. The more objective and factual writing is, the more effective it will be.

EXAMPLES

I. The music critic who expresses his view of a Detroit Symphony Orchestra concert will note the date, time, and place of the performance. Additionally, he will mention the orchestra's name as well as that of the conductor. He will say what compositions were performed and what instrument, if any, was featured. If there was a soloist, his or her name and credentials will also be stated. Other facts will likewise be employed to justify the opinion he offers. Objective words will be preferred to subjective ones.

After giving the necessary background information in his opening paragraphs, the critic might develop his thought in one of the following ways:

A. Last evening's symphony concert was well received by the audience. They especially liked the piano concerto with which the orchestra concluded the concert. The "Emperor" by Beethoven is a beautiful work that was well performed both by the soloist and by the orchestra itself. The rest of the concert was also quite good, and the evening was an enjoyable one, indeed.

B. The highlight of the evening was the masterful performance of Beethoven's "Piano Concerto No. 5 in E Flat Major," the "Emperor." Maestro Dorati's lively interpretation emphasized
the grandeur and heroism of the piece, while soloist Fleisher grasped every subtlety and nuance the composer intended. Especially striking were the lengthy passages where piano and orchestra worked together, each commanding attention. While Mozart's "Eine Kleine Nachtmusick" and Tchaikovsky's "Symphony No. 5, in E Minor" were well received, it was the spirited "Emperor" to which the audience responded with cries of "Bravo, bravo." When the concert-goers rose to their feet applauding at the conclusion of the program, Dorati and Fleisher rewarded them with a brief encore of the work's finale.

Obviously, example B gives more factual information and employs objective words to explain the opinion that is offered.

II. Notice the difference between paragraph A, devoid of facts and details, and paragraph B in which the bare essentials are fleshed out with facts from the movie.

A. The movie 10 has been very popular because it shows a real life situation about an aging man and what he goes through. Because of this movie, I now realize what being middle-aged means.

B. The movie 10 has been very popular because it shows a real life situation about a middle-aged man and what he goes through. A middle-aged man of about forty feels that he has entered the twilight years of life and that the only two main events that are going to happen to him are old age and death. George Webber, portrayed by a middle-aged Dudley Moore, plummets into a state of deep depression when he realizes he has entered his declining years. Not only does the middle-aged man worry about old age and death, but he misses the feeling of youth. He sees young people having fun and wishes he were part of it. In addition to showing a real life situation, the movie has an attractive supporting actress.

EXERCISE

A. Distinguish between fact and opinion in each of the following statements. Write F for a fact and O for an opinion.

1. Writing essays is difficult work.____

2. A sentence fragment is an incomplete sentence.____

3. Novelists often use fragments when they are writing dialogue.____

4. All high school students should be required to write at least one term paper.____

5. Northport, Michigan, is located on Grand Traverse Bay.____

6. One-half of all high school students in the Detroit area hold part-time jobs.____
7. Ernest Hemingway is one of America's greatest novelists.

8. On the average, the cost of a college education is three times what it was in 1959.

9. Knowing how to type is a valuable skill for a college student to possess.

10. Many colleges arrange their schedule so that the first semester ends before the Christmas holidays.

B. Determine whether the following words or phrases are subjective or objective. Write S for subjective and O for objective.

1. beautiful eyes ________ 6. interesting work________
2. careless work__________ 7. $275.00 rent___________
3. unpleasant sounds______ 8. high prices____________
4. laughing children_______ 9. a foggy day____________
5. unhappy students_______ 10. meaningless tasks________

C. Write a paragraph using facts to develop it. Be certain to use objective words as well. You might want to describe a sporting event or a traffic accident, or you may wish to discuss the cost of buying a car or renting an apartment.
ANSWERS

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C. Show your completed paragraph to an instructor for evaluation.