

The Classification Paper

A paper developed by classification has the following characteristics:

1. Classification divides a big category into small ones. For instance, a paper developed by classification may group domestic cats into long-haired cats and short-haired cats. It could, instead, group domestic cats into purebreds and mixed breeds.

Be sure you choose a subject you know about. You can't classify Japanese gardens effectively if you don't know the philosophical ideas that separate them. Choose subjects close to home: your interests, your job, your friends, your neighborhood, or your means of transportation.

2. The topic sentence will list the broad category and indicate the method of classification. Such a topic sentence may read something like this: *Among domestic cats, purebreds and mixed breeds have general behavioral differences.*
3. Development by classification *must* use a single means of categorizing. If a writer begins by dividing his friends into groups according to their age, he cannot also divide them by their talkativeness.
4. The means of classification must be clear to the reader. Whether the writer groups sewing machines into two groups or into five groups, the reader must be readily able to identify the separate groups.
5. Each separate category must be supported clearly with concrete details and examples.
6. The paper must include a conclusion which ties together the individual groups into the broad category established in the topic sentence.

Organization

1. A topic sentence will announce the broad category (the subject), tell how it will be divided into smaller groups (the means), and tell the number of subgroups (the number). Example: filing cabinets (the subject) divided by size (the means) into four groups (the number).
2. The writer should arrange the smaller groups into some kind of logical order.
3. The writer must provide sufficient concrete details and examples to allow the reader to see each separate group.
4. Effective transitions will carry the reader smoothly from one idea to the next and help the reader see the relationships of smaller groups to the large category.
5. The paper should end with a conclusion that ties together the small groups into the broad category. In brief, now that the writer has taken the broad category apart; now the writer should put it back together.