Philosophy of Story Map Writing

If a different graphic organizer is used for every type of paragraph, it is difficult for students to become independent thinkers and writers – because it is hard to know which graphic organizer to use if the assignment is not exactly the same as that which they have practiced.

By using the same graphic organizer in planning for a variety of different paragraph types, however, the students are better able to make connections and see consistencies between them. For example, they learn that no matter what the overall purpose of the paragraph is, the order of sentences stays the same – and the "job" of each sentence position stays the same.

As they learn this, the graphic organizer becomes a tool that they can rely on for helping them with any writing assignment – including those that are different from the ones they have practiced.

Generic Recipe for a Paragraph in Response to Literature

Order	Sentence	Job
1	Introductory Sentence	The "main idea" of the whole paragraph – state what the paragraph is going to be generally about. This sentence may introduce the title of the story, an important character, the setting, and/or the "purpose" of the paragraph.
2	Beginning of the story	Depending on the purpose of the paragraph, this may be the problem, the "before a change," or a character trait.
3	Events (middle of story)	Provide evidence that supports the purpose (how to get from the beginning to the end – from the problem to the solution, from *before the change* to *after the change*, etc.)
4	Ending of the story	Depending on the purpose of the paragraph, this may be the solution, the "after a change," etc.
5	Concluding Sentence	To tie back to the Introductory Sentence. To restate the message or purpose of the paragraph.

Because our goal is for the students to be able to read a story and decide for themselves what type of paragraph they want to write on it, it is helpful if they are used to using the same graphic organizer for a variety of different purposes. Using a tool for different purposes helps one to feel empowered, because they realize that they can take something they've learned to do and adapt it to something they haven't done.

When writing in response to literature, a generic Story Map may be used whenever there is a sequence of events that takes us from a beginning → a middle → an end. It can be used to describe the problem and solution in a story, the cause and effect in a story, or the character traits of a character in the story.

The recipe (order of sentences) for any paragraph with a sequence of events:

Color-coding helps visual learners

1) Introductory Sentence (on your own)
2) Copy from the "Beginning box"
3) Events in order (copy from back side of Story Map)
4) Copy from the "Ending box"
5) Concluding sentence (on your own)

Could also be labeled "**Main Idea of Paragraph**"
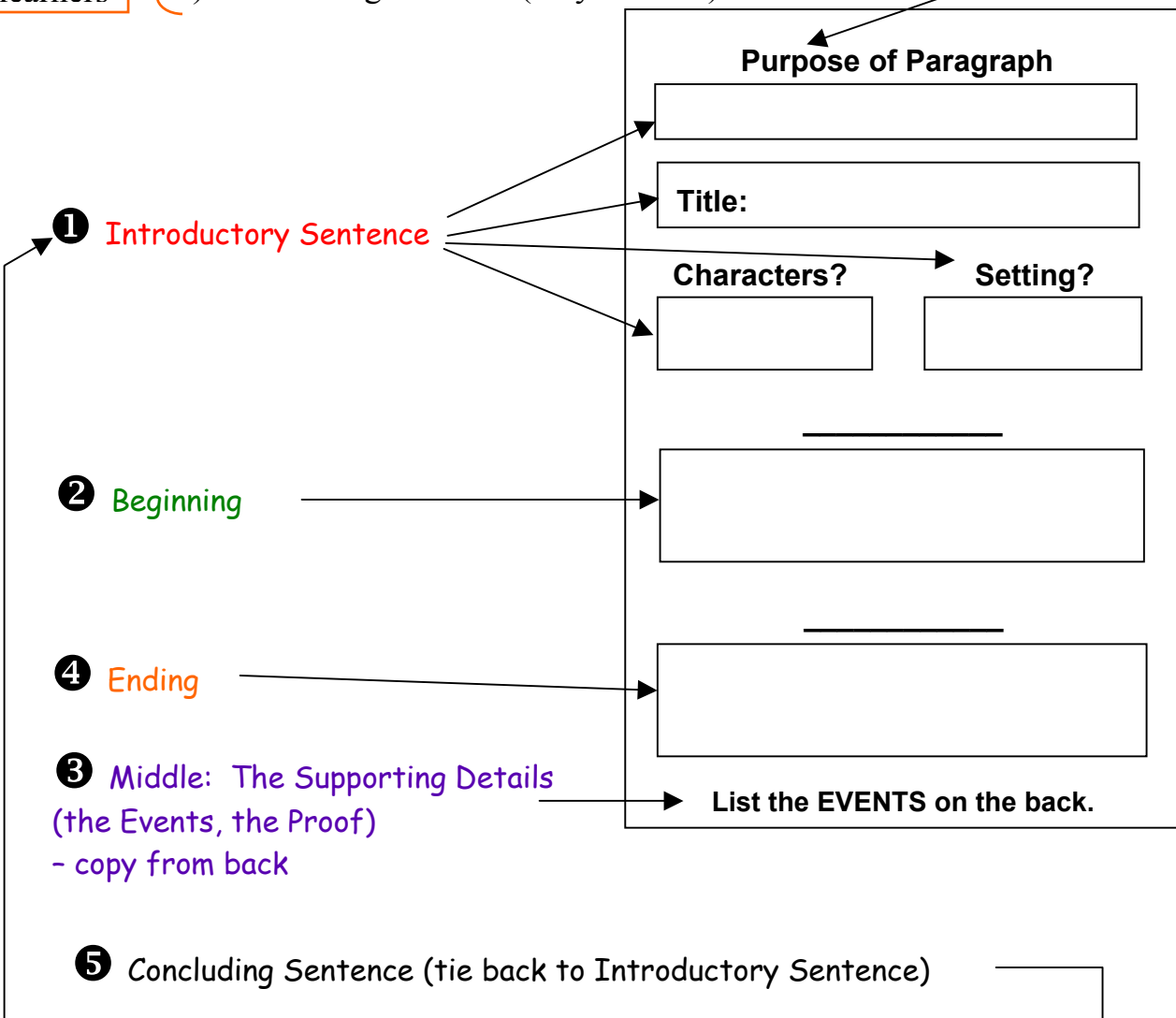
Choices include:
Problem-Solution
Cause-Effect
Character Trait

This could also be used for a simple retelling or summary of story: (beginning-ending, with events being the "middle")

Purpose of Paragraph

❶ Introductory Sentence

Title:

Characters?   **Setting?**

❷ Beginning

❹ Ending

❸ Middle: The Supporting Details (the Events, the Proof) – copy from back

List the EVENTS on the back.

❺ Concluding Sentence (tie back to Introductory Sentence)

Purpose of Paragraph

Summary

Title:

Characters?   **Setting?**

BEGINNING

ENDING

List the EVENTS on the back.

Purpose of Paragraph

Problem – Solution

Title:

Characters?   **Setting?**

PROBLEM

SOLUTION

List the EVENTS on the back.

Purpose of Paragraph

Cause – Effect

Title:

Characters?   **Setting?**

BEFORE

AFTER

List the EVENTS on the back.

Purpose of Paragraph

Character Trait

Title:

Characters?   **Setting?**

BEGINNING

ENDING

List the EVENTS on the back.