

## WRITING PARAGRAPHS

### Example:

Identify the Romantic elements in Wordsworth's "She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways"

- To answer this question you have to know
  - (a) the major characteristics of Romantic literature
  - (b) the poem
- The task is to put (a) and (b) into relation with each other.

### Putting the two together

Romantic poetry	"Untrodden Ways"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Simple language</li><li>• Emphasis on emotion</li><li>• Love of nature and preference for the simple country life</li><li>• Childhood is considered a purer state, closer to nature</li><li>• Exotic settings</li><li>• Supernatural elements</li><li>• Looking back to the Middle Ages for forms like the ballad, for themes like the knight</li><li>• Exaltation of the individual, often an outcast or rebel</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Four line stanzas with simple language and regular rhyme and meter (like ballads)</li><li>• Set in the country - <i>untrodden ways</i>, <i>beside the springs of Dove</i>, <i>none to praise</i> and <i>few to love</i> (implies few people around)</li><li>• Use of nature to express a deeper meaning - the girl is compared to a violet and a star</li><li>• Importance of the poet's emotion - in this case his love and grief</li></ul>

Eliminating the characteristics not found in our poem, we get the content for our answer:

Romantic poetry	"Untrodden Ways"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Simple language</i></li><li>• Emphasis on <i>emotion</i></li><li>• Love of <i>nature</i> and preference for the simple country life</li><li>• Childhood (followed by <i>youth</i>) is considered a purer state, <i>closer to nature</i></li><li>• Looking back to the Middle Ages for forms like the <i>ballad</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Four line stanzas with simple language and regular rhyme and meter (like ballads)</li><li>• Set in the country - <i>untrodden ways</i>, <i>beside the springs of Dove</i>, <i>none to praise</i> and <i>few to love</i> (implies few people around)</li><li>• Use of nature to express a deeper meaning - the girl is compared to a violet and a star</li><li>• Importance of the poet's emotion - in this case his love and grief</li></ul>

### Topic Sentence

Try to reduce your idea to one general statement and write a sentence. This is your guiding idea. Everything that follows must relate to it in some way. This sentence is called the **topic sentence**.

In this example, it's easy to write a topic sentence because the task has already defined your argument: Identify the Romantic elements in Wordsworth's *She Dwelt Among Untrodden Ways*.

- There are several Romantic elements in Wordsworth's *She Dwelt*.
- Wordsworth's *She Dwelt* has several important characteristics common to Romantic literature.

## The Body of the Paragraph

A paragraph can be developed by examples, by explanations and definitions, by description, by comparison and contrast and by other techniques. The simplest way to develop our topic sentence is to list the general characteristics of the genre and give examples from the text.

## Choose your Tools

Different kinds of texts tend to use different kinds of grammar. Narrative texts, for example, usually use past tenses. Opinion pieces and essays often require hypothetical structures and modal verbs. Talking about literary texts, stories and films frequently use the present simple (which in this case is called the historical present).

## First Draft

Wordsworth's *She Dwelt* has several important characteristics common to Romantic literature. The poet uses simple language and organises his poem into four-line stanzas with regular rhymes and meter, a technique which recalls the structure of the medieval ballad. The subject of the poem is a young woman who lived in the country (untrodden ways, beside the springs of Dove); both her age and the place where she lives associate her with the purity and naturalness of nature, a favourite Romantic theme. The young woman's character and beauty, as well as the poet's love, are expressed by using a simile and a metaphor which compare her to a violet and a star respectively. The Romantic emphasis on emotion is seen in the poem's movement from the impersonal description of the girl in the first two stanzas (she, a maid) to the revelation of the poet's personal involvement with the girl in the last stanza, where he tells her name, Lucy, and says that the world is no longer the same to him now that she is dead.

- When you have your main ideas written down in the order you want, then begin **revising**.
- Use your **dictionary** to check spelling and meaning.
- Add **linking words** when appropriate to make your text smoother.
- Don't forget to add a **concluding sentence** summing up what you have said.

## Final Draft

Wordsworth's *She Dwelt* has several important characteristics common to Romantic literature. First of all, the poet uses simple language and organises his poem into four-line stanzas with regular rhymes and meter, a technique which recalls the structure of the medieval ballad. The subject of the poem is a young woman who lived in the country ("untrodden ways", "beside the springs of Dove"); both her age and the place where she lives associate her with the purity and naturalness of nature, a favourite Romantic theme. Moreover, the young woman's character and beauty, as well as the poet's love, are expressed by using a simile and a metaphor which compare her to a violet and a star respectively. Finally, the Romantic emphasis on emotion is seen in the poem's movement from the impersonal description of the girl in the first two stanzas ("she", "a maid") to the revelation of the poet's personal involvement with the girl in the last stanza, where he tells her name, Lucy, and says that the world is no longer the same to him now that she is dead. In conclusion, in this poem Wordsworth uses form, language and themes which all place this work firmly in the Romantic tradition.