

## In Pursuit of Paragraphs

- Using only questions, write a paragraph. For stimulus, look at Virginia Woolf's essay 'Why?'
  - Take one question from the questions paragraph and write a new paragraph that addresses that question.
  - Discuss the relationship of theories to 'Queries' – see I.A. Richard's essay (*Speculative Instruments*, 1955):
    - Does a question have to have a direction?
    - Can't it go all ways at once?
    - Doesn't a question have to have a direction?
    - Can it go all ways at once?
  - After reading a piece of criticism, write a paragraph on the range of questions that may have prompted the writer to write the piece.
  - Experiment with paragraphs taking different positions in relation to a question (or proposition or argument). Choose from these, and other possible, bald openers, or distribute a range of openers amongst your group:
    - Yes, but...
    - Yes, if by...
    - No, and yes.
    - Absolutely not!
    - Not necessarily.
    - Of course not!
    - It depends.
- When the paragraphs are written remove the openers and see if it is possible to identify the kind of stance taken.

- Half way through the course, write a paragraph beginning ‘I’m beginning to believe that...’ (This is the opening phrase of an essay by Ishmael Reed) Return to this paragraph after more time has passed and extend or revise it.
- Write a paragraph about some aspect of your engagement with the texts and ideas in which at least half the sentences use ‘I’. Rewrite the paragraph retaining or developing the sense, but removing the ‘I’s. One ‘I’ may remain (in original or modified form).
- Write one very certain paragraph, and then very doubtful, tentative, questioning one on the same topic or text. Divide the page in half to do this so that the two paragraphs are juxtaposed.
- Write a third paragraph that draws on the thinking from both the certain and tentative paragraphs. Get somebody else to write one that might follow it.
- Use a web-based discussion forum for groups to write a chain essay over a week. In response to a question or title, one member of the group writes the first paragraph on day one; on day two, the second member writes the next and so on. The last member needs to conclude, or at least close the essay.
- Look at two (or more) differing introductions to a previous year’s essay question; then write two (or more) introductions to an essay question from this year’s course. Do the same with conclusions.
- Write a paragraph (or two) about paragraphs.