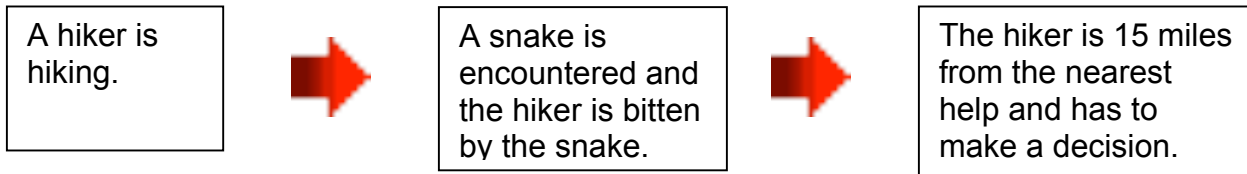




## 'Snakebite!'

### Paragraph plan

The plot is very simple:



The difficulty about the essay is to create the atmosphere required using ONLY 5 - 6 sentences per paragraph, so use a variety of sentence lengths. If you stick with short, simple sentences, you will find it difficult.

#### Paragraph 1

This paragraph will deal with describing the hiker and placing the hiker in a setting where the incident will take place. What does the hiker look like? What condition is the hiker in? Why is the hiker there? Recreation? Lost? Ranger? Plane crash? Describe the hiker in detail. You may use only 6 sentences, so make your words descriptive!

#### Paragraph 2

This paragraph will deal with a description of the surroundings (setting) and at the same time begin to create the foreshadowing of danger. Use the weather or season. Scorching? Freezing? Desert? Jungle? Describe colors, landscape, etc. Make good use of sense words, so the reader feels like they are right there with the hiker. Again, you are limited to 6 sentences only!

#### Paragraph 3

Use this paragraph to describe the snake. Don't waste time getting the snake to the site. Start the paragraph with a sentence such as "The crimson and gold markings on the snake glistened like jewels in the sun. . ." Deliberately avoid tension in this paragraph. Use the technique of observing small irrelevant details such as dry grass, snake shedding skin, markings, etc.

#### Paragraph 4

In this paragraph, deal with the encounter between the hiker and the snake. Use this paragraph to create the height of tension. How does the hiker behave in the wilderness? Daydreaming or deliberate? Delay the snakebite until the end of the paragraph. It's bite should be in hard contrast to the rest of the paragraph - startling even.

Example: "Before he even heard the rattle, the snake's venom was already coursing through his veins."

#### Paragraph 5

The snake moves away and the hiker is left to make a choice on what to do - wait for someone to come or walk the 15 miles for help? Perhaps you wish to explore some other possibility? The atmosphere to aim at is tension. Will the hiker make it or not? Try not to completely resolve the story, allowing the reader to imagine the final outcome.

Character descriptions

Show by description, don't tell. Using a few well-chosen Details is an excellent way of building character. Make the reader's imagination work, and if you allow him/her to complete the picture in his/her mind, this will be a very effective way of making your writing engaging and interesting to read.

Read the example opposite and think carefully about what makes it effective?



He shifted forward, squinting wickedly at my daughter. Drawing back his lips in the most sickening smile, he displayed teeth yellowed with age and neglect. He extended his filthy paw and grasped my hand. Leaning forward as he did so, he sent me reeling with disgust from the foul stink of his breath.

Describe something about the hiker that indicates why he is there. Write a paragraph, using the techniques discussed, to create character. Write no more than six sentences. Some details to start you thinking might be his ragged clothes, thin face, parched lips, etc.

The plot is very simple and you need to stick to it exactly, by following the five-paragraph plan. You have few characters who will remain nameless to add to the sense of mystery. You will be concentrating on creating atmosphere and building tension, and this means you will need to work very hard at creating an appropriate setting.

**the empty street**  
**the darkness descended slowly**  
**his palms felt clammy**  
**the voice was as hollow as a cave**

**shrieking owls**  
*The tarmac glistened after the rain*

Setting

What is your setting for "Snakebite"? Think about what you have learned - the descriptive techniques you have just learned can also be used effectively for establishing a sense of place too.

Read the example opposite and think carefully about what makes it effective.



There was a rich warmth about the room. The elegant simplicity of the furnishings did nothing to disguise the expense and care, which had gone into their making. I moved silently across the richly carpeted floor to the piano, and began to search through the papers for the document I sought.

Now read the phrases above. There is a range, from description of the weather, appeals to the senses, small details, use of imagery and people's reactions. Some are better than others.

Write a paragraph setting the scene of an isolated wilderness. This is the setting for 'Snakebite!'