

Hamburger Writing Strategy

Type of Writing Supported:

Persuasive, Narrative, Informational

Grade Level: **Grades 2-6**

Stage of Writing Supported:

Planning and Drafting

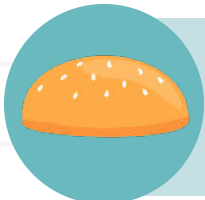
PURPOSE:

What does this strategy help students do?

The hamburger paragraph strategy helps students organize their ideas, evaluate topic focus, and strengthen weak content. It also guides them in building well-structured, detailed paragraphs using a clear visual model.

Why is this strategy effective?

This strategy is effective because it uses a familiar visual to make paragraph structure memorable and manageable. It helps students break writing into clear parts and build confidence by showing how much detail makes a strong, “juicy” paragraph.



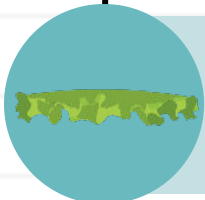
Main Idea

What is the main idea I want to share?



Juicy Detail 1

What detail, fact, or example do I want to share that supports my main idea?



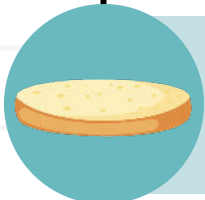
Juicy Detail 2

What is another detail, fact, or example that I want to share that supports my main idea?



Juicy Detail 3

What is one more detail, fact, or example that I want to share that supports my main idea?



Bottom Bun

How can I wrap up the paragraph clearly?

TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

How to Introduce:

- Show a hamburger image to explain paragraph parts.
- Use simple labels: top bun = topic, fillings = details, bottom bun = conclusion.
- Model writing live and build a visual anchor chart together.

Scaffolding:

- Use sentence starters to guide each paragraph part.
- Provide a hamburger graphic organizer with color-coded sections.
- Break writing into steps: brainstorm, organize, draft.
- Offer word banks for transitions and adjectives.
- Include tactile options like cut-and-paste burger pieces.

Practice Ideas:

- Build paragraphs using games, sentence sorting, or assembly lines.
- Use graphic organizers, checklists, or writing stations to guide structure.

DO'S

- ✓ Encourage creative thinking
- ✓ Use sentence stems
- ✓ Model each paragraph part live
- ✓ Reinforce the hamburger metaphor
- ✓ Write in order

DON'TS

- ✗ Don't assume students understand the metaphor
- ✗ Don't overcomplicate the details

Hamburger Strategy: Do's and Don'ts

DO'S

✓ Encourage creativity in supporting details

- Ask students to brainstorm facts, personal experiences, and observations before they even start writing. Also, you can use sentence stems to help students start brainstorming (ex. One surprising fact is...)

✓ Model each part of the paragraph explicitly

- Don't just describe the burger parts; actually write the paragraph live with your students! Model your thinking aloud as you walk through each step: "I'm writing the top bun. This is my topic sentence, so I need to tell the reader what I'll be talking about."

✓ Reinforce the metaphor of the hamburger regularly

- Make the hamburger metaphor a part of the writing conversation. Ask questions like "Did you build the full burger?" or provide constructive feedback by saying "That detail needs a little extra seasoning!"

✓ Write the paragraph in order

- Start with top bun, then juicy details, and end with bottom bun. This ensures students have a strong claim before they brainstorm details.

DON'TS

✗ Don't assume all students understand the metaphor without visual support

- Some students may not immediately draw the connection between a hamburger and writing. Continue to use the visual and model to build the connection between the top bun being the topic sentence, the fillings serving as the details, and the bottom bun being the concluding sentence.

✗ Don't overcomplicate the fillings (details)

- Keep it simple at first. Start with modeling facts, personal examples, or descriptions. As students start to become more proficient, set expectations about adding in adjectives and transitions.

Hamburger Strategy: Tips for Implementation

How to introduce the strategy

- Start strong by making the analogy concrete and visually engaging
- Use an actual hamburger image to explain each part of the paragraph: Don't just show a picture—really break down how each component of a hamburger corresponds to a paragraph.
 - Top Bun (Topic Sentence): Explain that this is like the top bun, holding everything together. It introduces the "meat" of the paragraph and tells the reader what it's all about.
 - Fillings (Supporting Details): These are the "delicious fillings"—the lettuce, tomato, cheese, and most importantly, the patty! Emphasize that these are the specific facts, examples, explanations, or evidence that support the topic sentence. Each "filling" should be a distinct piece of information.
 - Bottom Bun (Concluding Sentence): This is the bottom bun, giving the paragraph a sense of closure. It restates the topic in a new way or summarizes the main points, making the paragraph feel complete.
- Create a shared anchor chart with the hamburger visual for students to refer to - Make this a living document! As you introduce each part, add it to a large, clear anchor chart that includes the hamburger visual. Keep it prominently displayed in the classroom as a constant visual reminder and reference point for students as they write. You might even use different colored markers for each section of the hamburger to reinforce the visual breakdown.

Scaffolding for different learners

- Provide sentence starters for each part of the hamburger
 - Topic Sentence: "This paragraph will discuss...", "One important aspect of X is...", "Let's explore..."
 - Supporting Details: "For example...", "In addition...", "Specifically...", "This is evident when...", "Another point is..."
 - Concluding Sentence: "In conclusion...", "To summarize...", "Therefore, it is clear that...", "These points show that..."
- Use a graphic organizer with the hamburger visual
 - Color-Code Each Section - This can help students who benefit from visual cues and assists in self-checking.
 - Chunk the Organizer - Instead of one sheet, use three: one for brainstorming ideas (e.g., drawing or word mapping), one for organizing burger layers, and one for final draft. This could help students focus on the writing process step by step.
 - Interactive and Tactile Options - Use cut-and-paste burger pieces where students physically build their paragraph before writing. This is great for adding a kinesthetic component.

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Hamburger Strategy: Tips for Implementation

- Provide word lists to help students “spice up” their details
 - Transition Word Menu - Create a themed list like “Words to Serve Between Sentences” with examples: First, Next, Also, For example, Therefore. Group by purpose (sequence, contrast, explanation) and offer sentence starters.
 - Adjective Buffet - Provide descriptive word banks tailored to the topic. If students are writing about animals, offer words like “furry,” “loyal,” “graceful.” Encourage “try a new flavor” challenges: swap a bland word like “nice” for “enthusiastic” or “brilliant.”

Ideas for group practice

- Paragraph Assembly Line - Divide the class into small groups. Each student is responsible for one “burger layer.” Student A writes the topic sentence (top bun), Students B and C add 1-2 supporting details each (fillings), and Student D writes the concluding sentence (bottom bun). This activity requires graphic organizers or color-coded sentence strips. At the end, discuss the paragraph’s strengths and areas for growth.
- Burger Sentence Sorting Game - Give students a stack of mixed sentences (some topic, some details, some conclusions). In groups, students sort them into hamburger layers and build coherent paragraphs. This activity requires pre-planned paragraphs with each sentence cut as its own slip.
- Whole-Class Interactive Paragraph Build - The teacher selects a topic. Then, students brainstorm possible sentences for each layer on sticky notes. Together, the class builds the paragraph on a digital graphic organizer or chart paper.

Ideas for independent practice

- Burger Graphic Organizer - Students are given either a paper or digital graphic organizer. They practice writing their own topic, details, and conclusion about a teacher-selected topic or a topic of their choosing. This activity requires paper copies of the graphic organizer or digital templates.
- Self-Check Using a Visual Checklist - To show their comprehension of the strategy, students can use a checklist after writing to ensure they followed all the steps of the strategy. This checklist would include items such as “I wrote a strong topic sentence,” “I used at least three supporting details,” “I added a concluding sentence,” and “I stayed on topic with three unique details.”
- Writing Stations - Set up stations in your classroom for each part of the burger. At each of the three stations, students work on that particular part of the burger. Supplement sentence starter or word list visuals could be provided to specifically support the task at each station.

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What is the writing classroom?

The Writing Classroom was developed to help educators apply effective, evidence-based writing interventions. Originating at the University of Kansas with funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs, this initiative supports instructional strategies for all students, especially those who struggle with writing.

What is AI SCORE?

AI-SCORE enhances writing competency for students with learning disabilities by:

- Integrating evidence-based instructional strategies
- Providing immediate AI-generated feedback
- Personalizing the writing process to improve outcomes

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