

Do not start a topic sentence with he or she and do not refer to information mentioned in the title like in this eg:

**Kara's Favourite Day!**

~~She like Saturdays because she can sleep in.~~

Saturday is Kara's favourite day. She likes it because...

**Task 5: work in pairs and add as many SD as possible**

1. Travel by plane has several disadvantages.

- a. Airplane travel is generally expensive.
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Reading helps English language learners improve their English.

- a. Reading English texts helps learners expand their vocabulary.
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Consider these important factors when planning a party.

- a. Think about the number of guests you want to invite.
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

**Task 6: Read the following paragraph, identify the TS, and write a title**

I enjoy classroom discussions for several reasons. For example, I like to hear my classmates talk. There are some interesting people in my class, and I like to hear their ideas and opinions. I also like to practice speaking English. Classroom discussions help me learn to speak better. They make time in class go by faster, too. These are just a few of the reasons why discussions make classes more interesting.

**Task 7: circle the topic and underline the controlling idea in each topic sentence. Then, write two supporting and possible title for the paragraph**

1. Topic Sentence: Cities are exciting places to live.

There are interesting things to do, like going to restaurants, movies, and clubs.

You can meet many new people in cities.

Possible Title: The Benefits of City Living

2. Topic Sentence: Cities have many problems.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Possible Title: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Topic Sentence: Living alone is good in some ways.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Possible Title: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Topic Sentence: Living alone is hard in some ways.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Possible Title: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Topic Sentence: It is not easy to learn a new language.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Possible Title: \_\_\_\_\_

## Writing Assignment

**Task 8: work alone !** On a sheet, write 6 sentences about a figure you like or follow on social media.

### **2. Descriptive Paragraph**

*Model Paragraph 1: work in pairs. Read the \$ and answer the questions*

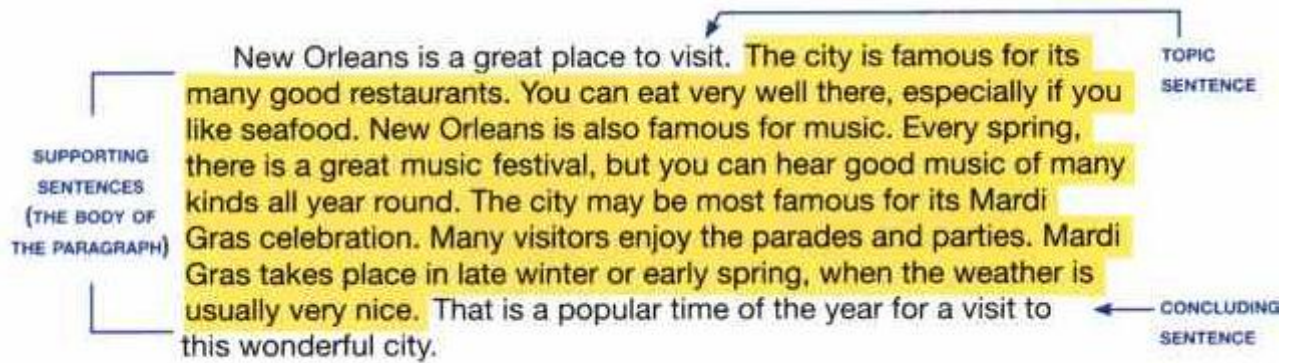
#### **My Hometown**

I am from Canóvanas, in the northeastern part of Puerto Rico, east of San Juan. My hometown is a small city with a big heart. There are about 30,000 people in Canóvanas. They are not rich, and their houses are small. There are many good people in my hometown. When there is a problem, they are always ready to help. My neighbors are like my family. That is the best thing about my hometown. I miss the friendly, helpful people of Canóvanas.

*Questions about the model paragraph:*

- 1- What is the topic of the paragraph?
- 2- What is the writer's main/controlling idea about the topic?
- 3- What sentences explain why the writer says that Canóvanas has a big heart?
- 4- What tense is used in the paragraph?

Most paragraphs end with a concluding sentence (CS) like in the example that follows. Compare the TS to the CS. How does the CS relate the sentence that precedes it!



Task1: read the paragraphs; then, identify the TS, the SSs, and the CS. Pay attention to the flow of ideas from one sentence to another!

## PARAGRAPH 1

### The Weather in My Hometown

Hong Kong, my hometown, is a wonderful place for many reasons, but the weather is not one of them. Our best weather is in the fall, but we have a lot of air pollution. For this reason, we do not see clear blue skies very often. The winters are short but cool and damp. I feel cold all the time in the winter. In the spring, there is too much rain. In the summer, it is too hot and humid. Summer is also the season for typhoons. Typhoons are the worst part of Hong Kong's weather. I love my hometown, but I do not love the weather there.



## PARAGRAPH 2

### The Job of a Firefighter

Firefighters do a very important job. First of all, they put out fires in people's homes and workplaces. They also respond to emergency calls. The calls may be about dangerous situations, such as car accidents or heart attacks. Many firefighters are EMTs (Emergency Medical Technicians). They can help people with many kinds of medical emergencies. Every community needs firefighters.

### Writing Assignment

Like in the the models above, write a descriptive paragraph of your hometown or the town you wish you were living in.

#### Writing Tip

Prewriting often helps a writer decide on a topic sentence. However, some writers like to write their first draft of a paragraph without a topic sentence. Then they add it afterwards. Remember that you can change your topic sentence when you revise and edit.

### 3. NarrativeParagraph

*Model Paragraph 1: work in pairs. Read the \$ and answer the questions*

### An Important Day in My Life

The day of my high school graduation was a good day for me. It was a Saturday. In the morning, I got dressed. I had a new suit and tie for that day. Then I went to a friend's house. Six of my friends were there. Later, we rode to the school together in my friend's car. At 2:00 P.M., all the students in my class entered the school gymnasium. My parents and grandparents were already in their seats, and they took a lot of pictures. The principal called the names of the honor students first. I was in that group, and I won a prize because I was the best math student. I was very happy about that, and my family was proud of me that day.

*Questions about the model paragraph:*

1. What is the topic of the paragraph?
2. What is the writer's main/controlling idea about the topic?
3. What details does the writer include in his description of the day?
4. What are some words or expressions that show that the writer is using time order?
5. What tense does the writer use in the paragraph?

*Model Paragraph 2: work in pairs. Read the \$ and answer the questions*

### **My Wedding Day**

I have many wonderful memories of my wedding day. I would like to tell you about three of them. First of all, I remember the beautiful weather. The week before was cold and cloudy, but my wedding day was sunny and warm. I felt lucky. I also remember seeing smiles all around me that day. Almost 100 of my relatives and friends were there. They liked my future husband, so they were happy for me. Most of all, I remember walking up the aisle with him after the ceremony. I carried a bouquet of yellow flowers, and I held his arm tightly. My heart was very full. This unforgettable day began a new life for me.

*Questions about the model paragraph:*

1. What is the topic of the paragraph?
2. What is the writer's main/controlling idea about the topic?
3. What three memories of her wedding does the writer focus on?

*Practice: Task 1: read the paragraphs and answer the questions that follow*

### **A Trip with My Family**

I have a happy memory from my childhood. When I was small, my family took a trip to a lake. It was in the summer. We went there early in the morning and stayed all day. I remember playing games on the grass with my brothers and sisters. We climbed trees, too, and that was fun. At noon, my father built a fire, and we made shish kebabs. It was a delicious lunch. After that, I remember lying on a blanket while my older sister told stories. I loved listening to them. I did not want to leave when it was time to go home. I had a lot of fun that day, so I will always remember that trip to the lake.

### **The Trip That Changed My Life**

My trip to the United States was a big shock. One day, my mother said, "Go and pack your clothes. Tomorrow we are going to New York. We are going to live there." The news was a complete surprise to me. I went to my room and sat on the bed for a long time. Then I called my best friend. The next morning, my mother and I got on a plane. I remember sitting next to the window and looking down on my city. I remember feeling scared about my future. After we landed in New York, my aunt picked us up, and we went to stay with her. My life changed overnight. I will never forget that trip.

1. Identify the topic sentences
2. What details do the writers give about the trip?
3. Identify the concluding sentences? Do the authors end the paragraphs by repeating words from the TS, or do they offer personal comments?



*Practice: Task 2: choose the appropriate concluding sentence for \$1 and write one for \$ 2*

### The Gift

Last year, during spring break, my parents gave me the gift of a trip. They bought me a plane ticket to visit my brother in Chicago. He and his wife had a new baby boy, and I wanted to see my nephew. I stayed in Chicago for five days and helped take care of the baby. I also did some of the laundry and cooking. I especially remember making the beef stew that my brother loves. \_\_\_\_\_

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- a. Now it is a year later, and my little nephew is learning to walk.
  - b. I tried to help my brother and sister-in-law as much as possible.
  - c. That trip was a gift from my parents to me and from me to my brother.

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Last spring, I had fun on a camping trip. I went with friends from my high school in Puerto Rico. First, we took a bus from our hometown, San Juan, to the town of Fajardo. Then we took a boat from Fajardo to the island of Culebra. There is a beautiful beach there called Playa Flamenco. We camped near the beach for five days. I got a sunburn and many insect bites, but I did not care. | .....

.....





The information included in a paragraph needs to be organized. The writer must put the information in some kind of order. This makes it easier to read and follow. There are many ways of organizing information in a paragraph. For example, you can use time (chronological ) order. Organization of ideas needs to be accounted for at the level of pre-writing.

This order is achieved also through the use of time order signals. The latter signal the order in which the events happen. Put a comma after a time order signal that comes before the subject at the beginning of a sentence. Then, so, and now are usually not followed by a comma.

TIME-ORDER SIGNALS	
Words	Phrases
First, (Second, Third, etc.)	Before beginning the lesson,
Later,	In the morning,
Meanwhile,	At 12:00,
Next,	After a while,
Now	After that,
Soon	The next day,
Finally,	At last,

## Arranging Sentences in Time Order

Read the groups of sentences. Number them to create a time-order narrative.

### GROUP 1

- \_\_\_\_\_ She made a cup of coffee so that she could stay awake to do her homework.
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ She went to a movie with her friends.
- \_\_\_\_\_ She tried to clean the coffee up, but the liquid was everywhere.
- \_\_\_\_\_ She put the cup of coffee on her desk next to her computer.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Her laptop doesn't work because there's coffee in it.
- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Last night, Kanna created a huge problem for herself.
- \_\_\_\_\_ She knocked the cup over.
- \_\_\_\_\_ She came home late.

### GROUP 2

- \_\_\_\_\_ Sarah called the credit card company to activate the card.
- \_\_\_\_\_ She waited for approximately one week for her card to arrive in the mail.
- \_\_\_\_\_ She submitted the application online.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sarah wanted to get her first credit card.
- \_\_\_\_\_ She got an application on the credit card company website.
- \_\_\_\_\_ She filled out the application.
- \_\_\_\_\_ She did research to find the credit card that was best for her.
- \_\_\_\_\_ She signed her new card on the back as soon as she received it.

## Writing Assignment

Like in the the models above, write a paragraph about an important event in your life.

**Step 1:** make notes in time order about what happened on the day of the event.

Freewrite about the vent for 5 minutes.

**Step 2:** look at your notes and decide what information is most important to your narration of the event. Decide also how you want to organize yourideas.

**Step 3:** write a draft starting with the topic sentence. Make sure that your supporting sentences show why your topic sentence is true. Add a title!

**Step 4:** revise your draft. Read it aloud and make the necessary changes. Do peer review. Consider the checklist bellow!

### **Content**

1. Read all of your partner's paragraph.
2. Underline any part of the paragraph you do not understand. Ask your partner to explain it.
3. Circle the topic sentence. If there is no topic sentence, write *TS?* on the paper.
4. Reread the supporting sentences. Ask questions if you want more information.
5. How did your partner organize the paragraph? On the paper, write *Time order* or *Listing order*. If the organization is not clear, write *Order?*.

### **Format and Language**

6. Use this list to check your partner's paper. Check (✓) each item as you finish.

<input type="checkbox"/> the format of the paper	<input type="checkbox"/> the use of simple past verbs
<input type="checkbox"/> a subject in every sentence	<input type="checkbox"/> the use of commas
<input type="checkbox"/> a verb for every subject	
7. Put a question mark (?) if you are not sure about something.

#### **4. Definition Paragraph**

This type of paragraphs gives clear definitions of abstract terms like friendship, courage, happiness or terms related to specific areas.

E.g., Business: what is recession?

History: what is manifest destiny?

Health: what are supplements?

If the concept is traced back to a different language, the writer can define it first in the original language (Latin, Greek, German, Arabic, or persian). The writer may also explain what is interesting about it if it a practice (like Thanksgiving).

*Model Paragraph 1: work in pairs. Read the \$ and answer the questions*

#### **Courage**

1 Courage is the quality of being brave in a dangerous or difficult situation. 2 The word *courage* comes from the Latin *cor*, meaning "heart." 3 Courageous people have big hearts. 4 They go the distance for what they believe in, despite the risks. 5 We all can think of courageous people from history. 6 Take American astronaut Neil Armstrong, for instance. 7 He bravely faced life-threatening situations during the *Gemini 8* and *Apollo 11* space voyages and became the first human to walk on the moon. 8 Nelson Mandela, the former president of South Africa, also exhibited enormous courage. 9 He put everything on the line to fight for racial equality in his home country. 10 However, courage is not confined to famous people. 11 For example, a soldier who goes into battle shows courage. 12 A firefighter who crawls into a collapsed building to help



an injured person also shows courage. **13** Then there are the acts of bravery that take place in everyday life. **14** For instance, a shy person who confronts the fear of public speaking and gives a speech is courageous. **15** A teenager who resists peer pressure to smoke, drink, or try drugs is extremely brave. **16** We all have friends or family members who have shown courage. **17** My friend Angela, who is terrified of flying, recently took her first airplane flight. **18** As she was about to walk onto the plane, she was trembling from head to toe, but she didn't allow herself to go to pieces. **19** She faced her fear and was glad she did. **20** In my book, Angela has a lot in common with the bravest people in the world.

### **Questions about the Model**

1. Find the topic sentence. What is the topic? Circle the word or a thing that the writer defines.
2. In a definition paragraph, the definition is the controlling idea. What is the writer's controlling idea about the topic? Underline it.
3. What kinds of information does the writer give to support the controlling idea?

One way to write a topic sentence for a definition paragraph is to give three pieces of information:

- 1- the word of the concept you will explain (topic)
- 2- the large category it belongs to

The distinguishing characteristic which makes this concept or thing different from other members of the category.

Courage is		
Thanksgiving is	The custom of	Giving thanks to the blessings of the harvest.

**The supporting sentences** of a definition paragraph present details that explain the topic in details. They could be additional facts telling who, what, where, when, how, and why. They may also be explanations of the process, examples, or descriptions.

E.g., Thanksgiving is popular in USA and Canada. Similarly named festival holidays occur in Germany and Japan.

*Practice: Task 1: read the \$ bellow and circle the word or the phrase in the list that describes the type of SS.*

### **Portable Memory**

A flash drive is a device for storing or moving digital files. It is also called a USB drive, thumb drive, jump drive, or pen drive. No matter what it is called, the device is the same. A flash drive is similar to a small computer hard drive. However, it has no moving parts, and it can be easily removed and carried in a pocket, in a bag, or on a keychain. A flash drive usually connects to a computer through a USB port and comes in a variety of shapes, sizes, and colors. Because it is convenient and reliable, a flash drive is now a standard piece of computer equipment.

- a. steps in a process
- b. reasons
- c. facts and descriptions
- d. narrative details

Task 2: read the paragraph and choose the best TS.

### Entrepreneurs

An entrepreneur is a person who takes a risk and makes money from a business that is new and different. An excellent example of an entrepreneur is Mark Zuckerberg, one of the creators of Facebook. He and several of his friends started the social networking site while they were students at Harvard University. Facebook changed the way that people communicate, and Zuckerberg became a billionaire. Another entrepreneurial success is Mrs. Fields, a bakery that was the first of its kind. Unlike shops that had cakes, pies, bread, and other baked goods, Mrs. Fields sold only cookies when it opened in 1977. Business experts predicted that Debbie Fields would never succeed, but she refused to fail. Entrepreneur Ingvar Kamprad began his business career in 1926 by selling matches to his neighbors at the age of five. He opened his first IKEA store when he was 17 with money that his father gave him for being a good student. As a result of his ideas about selling furniture and home goods at reasonable prices, there are now IKEA stores around the globe. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- a. Entrepreneurs share similar qualities. They are smart people who know how to make a lot of money.
- b. Entrepreneurs are very much alike. They are people who want to make a lot of money as quickly as possible.
- c. As these three examples show, entrepreneurs are well-educated people. Their education is the key to their success.
- d. These three examples show that entrepreneurs share a common characteristic. They are not afraid to take chances.

## **Writing Assignment:**

Task 3: Choose 4 words/ concepts/ customs that would be good topics for definition paragraphs. Write a topic sentence for each one. You may do a little research!

Choose one of these topic sentences and write a definition paragraph.

### **5. Cause Effect Paragraph:**

Analyzing causes and effects is an important part of academic writing. This type of paragraph could be about the causes of a war, the factors that led to the success of a company or a businesswoman, or the effects of a new social media platform on learning.

#### **What Paved the Way for Vélib's Success?**

<sup>1</sup> Vélib' has become the world's most successful bike sharing program since it was introduced in Paris in 2007. <sup>2</sup> There are three important causes for the success of Vélib'. <sup>3</sup> First, Paris leaders planned carefully to avoid missteps. <sup>4</sup> They analyzed where local residents and tourists were most likely to use bicycles. <sup>5</sup> Vélib' planners then selected convenient locations for bike stations near bus stops and subway entrances. <sup>6</sup> They also decided to have a distance of just 300 yards from one station to the next. <sup>7</sup> The short distance allows cyclists to pick up and return their bikes easily. <sup>8</sup> Second, the Paris government made Vélib' bikes affordable for riders with the cooperation of a large advertising company. <sup>9</sup> Because the company agreed to pay for the Vélib' bike stations and 20,000 bicycles in exchange for advertising space, a one-day pass costs just \$2.15. <sup>10</sup> With this prepaid ticket, cyclists can have an unlimited number of 30-minute rides. <sup>11</sup> Finally, Vélib' has been successful because of effective publicity. <sup>12</sup> The Paris leaders created an image of bicycles as a vehicle for the future rather than an outdated mode of transportation. <sup>13</sup> In a fashion capital, they convinced people that bikes are fashionable. <sup>14</sup> All in all, Vélib' has succeeded as a result of thorough planning, creative financing, and powerful marketing.



### Questions about the Model

1. Underline the topic sentence. Does the paragraph focus on causes (why something happened) or effects (what happened as a result)?
2. Underline the three main points of the paragraph.
3. In Sentence 9, is the word *because* introducing a cause or an effect?

### The Effects of Bike Sharing in Paris

Vélib', the world's most successful bike sharing system, has had three beneficial effects on cyclists since it was first introduced in Paris in 2007. The most obvious benefit has been the increase in activity among local people of all ages. Riding a bike is an excellent form of exercise. It leads to better overall health and an improved sense of well-being. Users of Vélib' also report another positive effect of the bike sharing system. They say they experience more day-to-day enjoyment. Cyclists have a chance to spend more time outdoors. While biking to work, they can see Parisian architecture, art, parks, and street life. These are things that commuters rarely have time to notice when traveling by bus, subway, or car. Finally, bike riders in Paris praise Vélib' for its socializing effects. They say that Vélib' has created a bond between cyclists. Experienced users often help new ones learn the Vélib' system. They also greet one another and chat. Because the cyclists are not crowded into a bus or train with a lot of angry commuters, they feel more like socializing. In conclusion, Parisians hope that Vélib' will result in fewer cars and less pollution in the future, but for now they are enjoying the positive effects that the bike sharing program has already produced.

The controlling idea of the topic sentence in a cause effect paragraph should let the readers know whether the focus will be on why something happened (causes) or what happened as a result (effects).

The organization of the causes/ effects should be logical (for eg: the order of happening). The order could be from the most obvious to the least obvious like in model 2. a third pattern of organization could be from the least important to the most important.

The concluding sentence could either restate the controlling idea (eg: several key strategies caused the success of Velib.) or summarize the main causes/ effects:

All in all, Vélib's success is the result of thorough planning, powerful marketing, and a commitment to convenience and affordability.

**Practice: Task 1: create an outline of the first model paragraph**

**Task 2: Read the text below and choose the most appropriate TS.**

## The Power of McDonald's

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To begin with, McDonald's changed diets around the world. Because of McDonald's, fast food became and continues to become increasingly common. Although hamburgers and fries existed long before McDonald's, the popularity of quickly prepared foods is in large part due to the effects of the fast-food giant. In addition to changing people's food choices, McDonald's also affected their choice of restaurants. From the 1950s on, as McDonald's gained in popularity, customers started to expect restaurants to serve food that was tasty and inexpensive. They also expected restaurants to be as simple, clean, and attractive as a McDonald's. As fast-food restaurants spread, many smaller family-owned businesses lost customers and had to close. As a result, the choice of places to dine became limited. Finally, McDonald's had a big influence on the world of advertising. The company created a very recognizable symbol, or brand, with its Golden Arches. McDonald's used it effectively in print and on television to attract customers. Over the years, other corporations have followed the McDonald's model in the creation of their own distinctive logos or brands. Clearly, McDonald's has had a powerful impact.

- a. There are several causes for the success of McDonald's.
- b. McDonald's changed how advertising is done.
- c. Hamburgers are popular around the world because of McDonald's.
- d. McDonald's has had significant and widespread effects.

**Task 3: read the paragraph. Cross out two sentences that are off-topic.**

**Then find one sentence that is not in a logical position. Replace it!**

### **Rooftop Gardens**

Rooftop gardens are badly needed green spaces that have many positive effects on urban neighborhoods. For many urban dwellers, the gardens offer a welcoming place to relax and connect with nature. However, rooftop gardens require careful planning. In addition to their beauty, rooftop gardens also cool the buildings beneath them in summer and warm them in winter. Thus, building residents use less energy to control the temperature. This means a decrease in air-conditioning and heating bills and air pollution. Another positive effect of rooftop gardens is related to clean air as well. A number of local governments have developed plans to fight air pollution. Green plants remove harmful gases such as carbon dioxide from the air through the regular process of photosynthesis. During photosynthesis, green plants produce their food from carbon dioxide, water, and sunlight. As part of the process, the plants release beneficial oxygen, which purifies the air around them. The most obvious effect is that rooftop gardens make any city more beautiful and livable, whether they are seen up close, from skyscrapers above, or from the city streets below. In conclusion, the natural beauty, financial savings, and better air quality that result from rooftop gardens show that they are a good idea for modern cities.



**Writing Assignment:**

*Task 4: make some research about « the switch to online banking » and write a paragraph about the its positive effects*

### **What Paved the Way for Vélib's Success?**

Topic Sentence: There are three important causes for the success of Vélib'.

- A. Main Point (Cause): Paris leaders planned carefully to avoid missteps.
  - 1. Supporting Detail: Analyzed where Parisians and tourists used bicycles
  - 2. Supporting Detail: Selected convenient locations for bike stations near subways and bus stops
  - 3. Supporting Detail: Decided on 300 yards from one bike station to the next for easy pick up and return of bikes
- B. Main Point (Cause): The Paris government made Vélib' bikes affordable for riders with the cooperation of a large advertising company.
  - 1. Supporting Detail: Money for bike stations and 20,000 bikes in exchange for advertising space
  - 2. Supporting Detail: Cost of one-day pass just \$2.15
- C. Main Point (Cause): Vélib' has been successful because of effective publicity.
  - 1. Supporting Detail: Created image of bicycles as a vehicle for the future
  - 2. Supporting Detail: Convinced people that bikes are fashionable

Concluding Sentence: All in all, Vélib' has succeeded as a result of thorough planning, creative financing, and powerful marketing.