

Topic Sentences

Topic sentences help organize the ideas in an essay. Topic sentences convey the main idea of an individual paragraph and usually appear at the beginning of each paragraph.

Topic sentences:

- A topic sentence functions as a kind of mini thesis statement for the paragraph, and it tells the reader the main idea of the individual paragraph.
- The topic sentence usually appears at the beginning of the paragraph.
- The topic sentence should state the paragraphs main idea as well as create a smooth transition from the preceding paragraph.
- Not all paragraphs have a topic sentence. However, using topic sentences is a good way to help organize the writing and make sure the essay is staying focused on the main point (as stated in the thesis).

Remember to use the topic sentence as a way to focus the essays paragraphs. If the essay strays from the topic within the paragraph, consider beginning another paragraph that deals with the new topic. When editing drafts of essays, be certain that the topic sentences accurately reflect the content of each paragraph.

Sometimes it helps to write a draft of the essay, then go back and add topic sentences to the works body paragraphs. To do this, ask “**What is this paragraph about?**” for each body paragraph in the essay, then be sure the first sentence clearly states what the paragraph is about.

Tips and tricks!

After composing the first draft of an essay, go back and look at the thesis statement (typically the last sentence in the first paragraph) and each of the topic sentences (the first sentences of the body paragraphs). These sentences together should completely summarize and express the main points of the essay. If these sentences do not express the main points of the essay, then the thesis probably needs revision or topic sentences need to be added to body paragraphs.

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