



WRITING  
CENTER



# Topic Sentences: Guiding & Organizing



A topic sentence is the first sentence in a paragraph that introduces the main idea or point of its section. It functions as a roadmap for the reader, telling them what to expect in the rest of the paragraph. Every body paragraph in an essay should begin with a topic sentence that clearly ties back to the thesis statement to ensure that the paragraph contributes to the overall argument.

Essay

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Example:  
“For instance, [example] demonstrates how [main idea] connects to the broader argument about [thesis].”

Cause and Effect:  
“The impact of [cause] is evident in [effect], which highlights [thesis-related point].”

Argument/Analysis:  
“One key reason [main idea] is because [explanation of how it supports the thesis].”

Contrast:  
“While [alternative viewpoint] might suggest [contrast point], the reality is that [thesis-related point].”

Problem/Solution:  
To solve [problem], [solution] must be implemented, which supports the thesis that [thesis-related point].

Significance Statement  
What makes [thesis-related point] especially important is [consequence or deeper impact].

Clarification/Definition  
[Key term from thesis-related point] means [definition], which supports the thesis by [clarifying role].



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## Test your knowledge.

Read each topic sentence carefully. Then, identify which type of topic sentence it represents by choosing from the list. Write the type and a brief explanation of your reasoning.

Although many people believe standardized tests measure intelligence, they often reflect test-taking ability more than true understanding.

Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

To address the rise in teen anxiety, schools must implement consistent mental health education and support programs.

Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How can we expect students to succeed when they lack access to basic resources like books and internet access?

Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Write one of your own topic sentences below. Then, identify which type of topic sentence it represents by choosing from the list. If it doesn't fit one of the listed types, revise it, and write an explanation for why you chose the model.

Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Write one of your own topic sentences below. Then, identify which type of topic sentence it represents by choosing from the list. If it doesn't fit one of the listed types, revise it, and write an explanation for why you chose the model.

Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_