

TOPIC SENTENCES

*Why do
I need topic
sentences?*

Topic sentences help make the main idea of a paragraph clearer and give the paragraph a sense of coherence.

*What is the
purpose of a
topic sentence?*

Topic sentences have many purposes. A topic sentence:

1. Makes a claim – a mini “thesis” statement,
2. Explains what the paragraph will say,
3. Unifies the sentences of a paragraph,
4. Relates the paragraph to the purpose of the paper, and
5. Supports the claim made in the paper.

*Where does
my topic
sentence go?*

A topic sentence is usually the first or second sentence of a paragraph. This will help the reader understand the paragraph’s point before reading it. The topic sentence may sometimes be the final sentence – this is used to effectively “wrap up” the paragraph and emphasize a point.

*Do I always
need a topic
sentence?*

No – if your paragraph is part of a narrative (narrating events), continues to explain the same idea as the previous paragraph, or is shorter and serving as a transitional paragraph, then it does not need a topic sentence.

EXAMPLES

A topic sentence has many important duties to a paragraph. A topic sentence must highlight the main idea of a paragraph, letting the reader know what the paragraph will be about. The topic sentence must present an idea that will unify the rest of the paragraph while relating it back to the main thesis of the paper. It also must help support the main thesis – it can do this by including the most important details of the paragraph within it.

Topic sentences belong at the beginning or end of the paragraph and must make the reader understand the point of the paragraph better. The topic sentence being at the beginning of the paragraph makes it easier for the reader to understand what the paragraph will be about. However, placing it at the end of the paragraph can help emphasize the point of the paragraph. **The placement of a topic sentence is one of the most important aspects of writing a paragraph.**