

Topic Sentences

Topic sentences are like small thesis statements. They state the main idea of the paragraph. The rest of the paragraph must expand, describe, or prove what the topic sentence states in some way.

Topic sentences make a point and give reasons or examples to support it. Similar to a thesis statement a good topic sentence states the main idea (an interesting subject), and then adds what you want to say about the topic (your specific feeling/opinion about it).

An interesting subject + your feeling/opinion about it = a good topic sentence

Your specific opinion could include:

Precautions To survive at Camp Green Lake the campers in Tent D must take several precautions.

Advantages There are several advantages to being the leader of Camp D.

Reasons for Clyde Livingston was Stanley's hero for a number of reasons.

The causes of/the effects of

Bad luck followed Elya Yelnuts everywhere as a result of breaking his promise to Madame Zeroni.

The steps for By following these simple directions you can make nail polish from rattlesnake venom.

The way to or the method

Stanley learned to avoid being caught on the Warden's cameras by following these steps.

Parts, kinds, or types The Texas desert contains many types of dangerous creatures.

Qualities of The campers in Tent D appeared to be ready to fight for the smallest of reasons.

Difficulties of or obstacles to

To understand Zigzag's weird behavior you must be aware of several problems he had faced before coming to Camp GreenLake.

Activity 1

Using the model sentences above, think of a topic that interests you; now write different topic sentences on the one topic, changing your feeling/opinion of the topic. For example, I might decide to write about "Addiction to Prescription Medications"; this would be my topic. Look at the three example sentences below:

1. (precaution) To prevent their patients' addiction to pain killers, doctors should think about several factors before prescribing them.
2. (advantages) If one is currently taking prescription medication (pain killers), there are several advantages to frequent contact with the doctor.
3. (reasons for) There are many reasons why people become addicted to prescription medication.

Any of the examples above would serve as a good topic sentence for a paragraph.

Now write one sentence for each of the 9 types of "feelings/opinions".

Activity 2

Below you will see pairs of sentences. Each pair contains one sentence that would make a good topic sentence and another sentence that would make a good detail sentence. Write **T** before the sentence in each pair that would make a good topic sentence. Write **D** before each sentence that would make a good detail sentence.

1. _____ Texas has 267,000 square miles.

2. _____ Texas is so big that you can find many things to do.

1. _____ A bully is a boy or girl who acts mean or hurtful to others.

2. _____ Bullies sometimes hit, kick, or push to hurt people.

1. _____ The lack of rain in deserts greatly affects the type of vegetation there.

2. _____ Desert plants are mainly ground-hugging shrubs and short woody trees.

1. _____ There are several ways for accurately telling how old fossils are.

2. _____ The animal dies and sinks to the sea floor.