

## TOPIC SENTENCES

<b>Topic Sentence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It informs the reader about the main idea of the paragraph and sets the focus of the paragraph.</li> <li>• It consists of the topic and the directing words.</li> <li>• It is usually the first sentence in the paragraph, but it may come after a transitional sentence.</li> </ul>
<b>Examples:</b>	<p>Returning to college to further my education was the smartest thing I ever did.</p> <p>The flood caused by the heavy rains did a lot of damage to the strawberry crop.</p>

### What Makes a Good Topic Sentence?

- It is usually a one-sentence statement that indicates purpose, subject, or point of a paragraph.
- A topic sentence should be specific.
- It is the controlling idea for the paragraph.
- Keep in mind that Narrative doesn't necessarily include a topic sentence.
- It helps your reader identify your major ideas.

*(From A Commonsense Guide to Grammar and Usage, Fifth Ed. by Larry Beason and Mark Lester published by Bedford/St. Martins 2011)*

### Common Types of Topic Sentences:

Common Types:	Examples:
<b>The Direct Approach</b>	It explicitly announces the purpose of the paragraph. <b>Example:</b> The purpose of this paragraph is to explain why colleges should lower tuition. <b>(Typically used in technical writing, scientific writing, or speeches.)</b>
<b>The Question</b>	It indicates the paragraph's purpose by posing a question it will answer. <b>Example:</b> Why should we debate this issue anyway?
<b>The Nutshell</b>	It states the main idea—not the purpose—of the paragraph, usually in just one sentence. <b>Example:</b> Before long, I realized my aunt was sick. <b>(This is probably the most common type of topic sentence in college writing.)</b>
<b>Addressing the Reader</b>	It anticipates what readers might be wondering about or doubting. The paragraph provides a response. <b>Example:</b> You might be wondering why it is necessary to build a new stadium.
<b>Connecting to the Previous Paragraph</b>	It makes a clear link with the preceding ideas. <b>Example:</b> Let me offer one example of this concept.
<b>The Alert</b>	It calls special attention to a point the paragraph will cover. Readers should understand the importance of the paragraph. <b>Example:</b> It would be a mistake to assume that students don't care about racism.

Bad Topic Sentence	Good Topic Sentence
Ruth Bader Ginsberg was born in 1933. <b>(Not enough info for reader.)</b>	Ruth Bader Ginsberg, born in 1933, is one of the most influential Supreme Court judge in history.
Employment opportunities are important. <b>(Statement is too broad.)</b>	Employment opportunities are important in lowering crime rates.
The electric car industry became practical in the late 1800s. <b>(Not thorough enough.)</b>	Technological advancements in the late 1800s ushered in the first truly practical electric cars.
I am going to explain how electric cars are better for the environment. <b>(Not precise enough.)</b>	While electric cars do not eliminate pollutants, their improved efficiency is a huge step towards a cleaner future.
Electric cars should be a priority because they're better than environment-polluting gas guzzlers, and in just a few years, air pollution will become so awful that breathing comfortably will be impossible. <b>(Not brief enough.)</b>	Given how much electric cars could positively impact society, the automotive industry should make research and funding a priority.
I am going to discuss the Battle of Stalingrad. <b>(It is too vague.)</b>	The Battle of Stalingrad, fought in 1942, was a turning point in World War II.

### Topic Sentence Checklist

- Is your main idea clear?
- Is your topic sentence the controlling idea of your paragraph?
- Is your topic sentence precise, brief, yet thorough?

**If the answer to any of these is yes, then feel free to proceed with your paper.**