

APSU Writing Center

Topic Sentences

Topic Sentences

- The first sentence of every paragraph should express the paragraph's main idea.
- You can write it after drafting the paragraph to clarify your main idea and point.
- Supporting details or citations should develop or further explain the topic sentence.
- Topic sentences should be concise and easy to understand at first glance

Topic Sentences can...

- Provide evidence to back up your central claim.
- Respond to potential counterarguments.
- Acknowledge complications or limitations in your central claim.
- Point out further implications of your research.

Questions to Evaluate Your Topic Sentence

- Does the topic sentence support my thesis?
- Does it transition from the previous paragraph or show a relationship with it?
- Does it clearly identify the point of this paragraph, or signal a shift in the argument?
- Why have I chosen to include this information?
- Why is this paragraph important in the context of my argument?
- What point am I trying to make?

APSU Writing Center
Topic Sentences

How to create a Topic Sentence

- Focus on a single aspect of your subject.
 - **Example:** Instead of covering all campus resources, choose one such as the APSU Writing Center, then break it down to a single aspect such as the benefits of online appointments.
- Combine the single aspect with your opinion or argument.
 - **Example:** Online appointments at the APSU Writing Center are accessible for commuting students.
- Avoid creating announcements or phrases in your topic sentence.
 - **Example:** “My paper is about...” or “This writer believes...”

APSU Writing Center
Practice Writing Topic Sentences

Consider topic sentences as small thesis statements. They are useful for outlining and organizing your paper. Practice by completing the blank boxes below, and using this format throughout your writing.

Thesis:

Topic
Sentence 1:

Topic
Sentence 2:

Topic
Sentence 3:

Topic
Sentence 4:

For additional practice, read each paragraph and write a topic sentence for it in the boxes provided.

Topic Sentence:

Example Paragraph: Many commuter students find it difficult to visit the writing center in person due to long travel times or conflicting class schedules. Online appointments make it easier for these students to get help from home or even between classes.

Topic Sentence:

Example Paragraph: Eating a balanced breakfast can improve your focus in class. Studies show that students who eat a nutritious meal in the morning perform better on tests and stay alert longer. Even something simple like fruit and whole-grain toast can make a difference.

Topic Sentence:

Example Paragraph: Volunteering at the APSU Food Pantry gives students valuable experience while helping the community. Organizing donations and assisting students helps them develop teamwork and leadership skills.



APSU Writing Center

References

CUNY Writing Center (2021, April 2). *Topic sentences*. The Writing Center, CUNY.

<https://gcwritingcenter.commons.gc.cuny.edu/topic-sentences/>

Hall, J., & Plotnick, J. (n.d.). *Using topic sentences*. University College Writing Centre,

University of Toronto. <https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/planning/topic-sentences/>

Ordoubadian, M. H. (2024, May). *COM 6: Topic sentences*. University Writing Center, Middle

Tennessee State University. <https://writing-center.mtsu.edu/wpcontent/uploads/sites/72/2024/05/COM6Topic.pdf>

Tidewater Community College Writing Center. (2003, November 26). *Topic sentences*.

Tidewater Community College. <https://www.tcc.edu/wp-content/uploads/archive/writing-center-handouts/essay-development-topic-sentences.pdf>

Touro University Writing Center. (n.d.). *Topic sentence*. Touro University.

<https://www.touro.edu/departments/writing-center/tutorials/topic-sentence/>