

Topic Sentences

APSU Writing Center Handout

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?

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...”

References

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