

TOPIC SENTENCES

WHAT IS A TOPIC SENTENCE?

- A topic sentence introduces a paragraph by presenting the *one* topic the paragraph will focus on
- A topic sentence should be narrow and focused (even more so than the thesis of the essay)
- A topic sentence should support the thesis of the essay

WHERE DOES A TOPIC SENTENCE GO?

- A topic sentence is usually the first sentence in a paragraph, but it may be more than one sentence long

WRITING AN EFFECTIVE TOPIC SENTENCE

- DO
 - Clearly state the main idea of the paragraph
 - Include your opinion, assertion, or controlling claim
 - Be concise
 - Make the sentence interesting; engage the reader
 - Include detail
- DON'T
 - Use vague language
 - Present a broad idea
 - Use empty language (unnecessary words)

TOPIC SENTENCE EXAMPLES

- Ineffective: Lincoln was a good president.
 - The above topic sentence is ineffective because it lacks clarity. It assumes the reader will know who Lincoln is
 - This topic sentence could be about Abraham Lincoln, the President of the United States

OR

- It could be about George Lincoln, President of the Springfield P.T.A.
- More Effective: As President, Abraham Lincoln led the United States through a divisive period in history.

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