ENGLISH, LITERACY, AND COMMUNICATION

Topic sentences

Difficulty level: Easy

English, Literacy, and Communication

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Overview of the concept

This is how you open each paragraph with its main idea, like a headline that tells your reader what the paragraph is about before they read the rest. A topic sentence gives the reader the point of the paragraph up front, so the sentences that follow make sense as support for it. Without one, the reader has to work out the point for themselves, and they may get it wrong. That is how a paragraph earns its place in an essay, with its idea stated clearly at the start.



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Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q Write a topic sentence for a paragraph about dogs needing care.

SOLUTION

Decide the paragraph's one main idea: dogs need care.

State that idea in one clear sentence at the start.

So: Dogs need care from their owners.

EXAMPLE 2

Q Which is the better topic sentence for a paragraph about bees? (a) Bees are insects. (b) Bees help plants in important ways.

SOLUTION

Ask: which one matches the paragraph's point about helping plants? (b)

(a) is true but too general; it does not preview the paragraph.

So the better topic sentence is (b).

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Practice questions

1 **Which sentence opens a paragraph about trees helping people best?**

- **A** Trees help people in several ways.
- **B** Trees have leaves.
- **C** Trees are plants.

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2 **Which is the best topic sentence for a paragraph about exercise and health?**

- **A** Exercise benefits health in several ways.
- **B** Exercise is a thing.
- **C** Exercise makes you sweat.

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3 A paragraph about the uses of libraries needs an opening sentence. Which of these two opens it better?

- **A** (a) Libraries are useful places.
- **B** (b) Libraries have books.

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4 Which sentence opens a paragraph about good friends best?

- **A** Good friends act in caring ways.
- **B** Friends are people.
- **C** My friend has a red bike.

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5 Your paragraph is about rain helping farms. Which sentence opens it best?

A (a) Rain helps farms in several ways.

B (b) Rain is wet.

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6 A paragraph about how clean cats are needs an opening sentence. Which of these two opens it better?

A (a) Cats are animals.

B (b) Cats are clean animals.

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7

Which sentence opens a paragraph about reading and learning best?

A Reading helps learning in several ways.

B Reading uses books.

C I read every night.

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8

Which sentence opens a paragraph about saving money best?

A Saving money regularly has clear benefits.

B Money is paper.

C I saved five dollars.

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9 A paragraph about how fast and useful trains are needs an opening sentence. Which of these two opens it better?

- **A** (a) Trains are fast and useful.
- **B** (b) Trains have wheels.

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10 Which sentence opens a paragraph about healthy food best?

- **A** Healthy food helps the body in several ways.
- **B** Food is eaten every day.
- **C** Apples are red.

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ANSWER KEY

1. Trees help people in several ways.

2. Exercise benefits health in several ways.

3. (a) Libraries are useful places.

4. Good friends act in caring ways.

5. (a) Rain helps farms in several ways.

6. (b) Cats are clean animals.

7. Reading helps learning in several ways.

8. Saving money regularly has clear benefits.

9. (a) Trains are fast and useful.

10. Healthy food helps the body in several ways.

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