Writing Topic Sentences

Mini-lesson
A *topic sentence* is a statement that tells what your paragraph will be about.
A good *topic sentence* does two important things.

1. Helps you stay focused on the main idea of your paragraph

2. Helps readers to know what your paragraph will be about
A *topic sentence* should:

- State the main idea,
- Include or summarize reasons that support main idea, and
- Make a claim about the main idea of the paragraph.
Let’s read a topic sentence and see if we can identify the

• Main idea (what you’re writing about)
• Support (what you think about the topic)

A healthy diet includes fruits and vegetables.

What claim is being made?
For a diet to be healthy it must include fruits and vegetables.
1. Ask yourself: “What am I writing about?”
   The answer to this question will be your main idea.

2. Ask yourself: “What do I know about the main idea?”
   The answer to this question will be your support.

3. Create a bubble map.

   ![Bubble Map Image]
Create a Bubble Map

1. Write your main idea in the middle of a piece of paper.

2. Draw a circle or box around it.

King Lot was a better King than Liholiho

This will be the topic of your paragraph.
3. Draw a line from your bubble.
4. Write one reason that supports the main idea at the end the line.
5. Draw a box or circle around each idea.
6. Repeat for additional reasons.

King Lot was a better king than Liholiho

- Took his power back
- Made decisions on his own
Main Idea

King Lot was a better king than Liholiho

Took his power back

Made decisions on his own

Support

What is the main idea?

What are the reasons that support the main idea?
What are you writing about?

King Lot was a better king than Liholiho

What do you know about the main idea?

He took back his power and made decisions on his own
Can you summarize the reasons that support your main idea?

He was more powerful.

or

He demonstrated better leadership.
Can you write a topic sentence using this main idea and summary of your supports?

Main Idea

**King Lot was a better king than Liholiho because he demonstrated better leadership.**

Support

- Took his power back
- Made decisions on his own
King Lot was a better king than Liholiho because he demonstrated better leadership.

What claim is being made?

King Lot was a better king than Liholiho.
Let’s look at an example

What is this bubble map about?
The answer to this question will be the main idea.

Playing in an ensemble

What can I say about this main idea?
The answer to this question will be the support.

Effective Communicator and Community Contributor
Let’s look at an example

What topic sentences could you write from this bubble map?
Being an effective communicator and a community contributor are important for playing in an ensemble.

Or if you summarize your reasons
Several of the GLOs are important for playing in an ensemble.
1. Write the topic sentence in the What column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you think?</th>
<th>Why do you think it?</th>
<th>How do you know this?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write one sentence that tells what you think.</td>
<td>Give reasons that tell why you think what you think. Why do I think this way?</td>
<td>Give examples to show what you think.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>What do you think?</em></td>
<td><em>What details describe what you think?</em></td>
<td><em>What examples prove my thought?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>What is the main idea of the paragraph?</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several of the GLOs are important for playing in an ensemble.
2. Write sentences for the reasons that support the main idea in the Why column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you think?</th>
<th>Why do you think it?</th>
<th>How do you know this?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write one sentence that tells what you think.</td>
<td>Give reasons that tell why you think what you think. Why do I think this way?</td>
<td>Give examples to show what you think.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>What do you think?</em></td>
<td><em>What is the main idea of the paragraph?</em></td>
<td><em>What details describe what you think?</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Several of the GLOs are important for playing in an ensemble.
- Being a community contributor means being able to work together.
- Effective communicators are able to communicate with other people.
3. Write examples that support each reason in the how column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you think?</th>
<th>Why do you think it?</th>
<th>How do you know this?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write one sentence that tells what you think...&lt;br&gt;• What do you think?&lt;br&gt;• What is the main idea of the paragraph?</td>
<td>Give reasons that tell why you think what you think. Why do I think this way?</td>
<td>Give examples to show what you think.&lt;br&gt;• What details describe what you think?&lt;br&gt;• What examples prove my thought?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several of the GLOs are important for playing in an ensemble.</td>
<td>1. Being a community contributor means being able to work together.</td>
<td>• An ensemble is a group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Effective communicators are able to communicate with other people.</td>
<td>• If an ensemble members can’t work together, it won’t sound good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>• We have to help each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensemble members have to communicate what needs to be worked on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Criticism has to be constructive so people’s feelings aren’t hurt.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Writing a Topic Sentence
Teacher Hints
Writing a Topic Sentence

- Give the class a common topic. Some ideas...
  - Journal: My Thanksgiving holiday
  - Language Arts: My favorite character from ___
  - Science: Sources of renewable energy in Hawaii
  - History: Greek goddesses

- Create a bubble map as a class. Write the topic in the center.

- Offer a sentence starter. Explain how you wrote the sentence starter. Some ideas...
  - Journal: ____ was the best part of Thanksgiving.
  - Language Arts: ____ was my favorite character from ___.
  - Science: ____ is one source of renewable energy.
  - History: ____ was the Greek goddess of ___.

- Concentrate on developing good topic sentences.
Fruits and vegetables are healthy foods.

- **Find the subject.**
  - Ask: “What are healthy foods?”
  - Answer: “Fruits and vegetables.”
  - “Fruits and vegetables” is the compound subject.

- **Find the predicate.**
  - Ask: “What is being said about fruits and vegetables?”
  - Answer: “Fruits and vegetables are healthy foods.”
  - “Are healthy foods” is the complete predicate.
Grammar Connections

**Recess is my favorite part of day.**

- **Find the subject.**
  - Ask: “What is my favorite part of the day?”
  - Answer: “Recess.”
  - “Recess” is the subject.

- **Find the predicate.**
  - Ask: “What is being said about recess?”
  - Answer: “Recess is my favorite part of the day.”
  - “Is my favorite part of the day” is the complete predicate.
1. Look at this example bubble map.

![Bubble Map]

2. Ask: “What is this bubble map about?”
   The answer to this question will be your **Topic**.

3. Ask: “What can I say about this topic?”
   The answer to this question will be your **Ideas**.

Example Topic Sentences:

A healthy diet includes **fruits and vegetables**.

(Topic) (Ideas)
Let’s look at an example.

A topic sentence is like a map that tells your reader where your paragraph is going.

Read this sentence. Can you guess what the paragraph will be about?

A healthy diet includes fruits and vegetables.
A healthy diet includes fruits and vegetables. (Topic) (Ideas)

The paragraph might be about...
• different fruits and vegetables
• why fruits and vegetables are healthy
• the nutrients found in fruits and vegetables.
Let’s look at an example.

A topic sentence is like a map that tells your reader where your paragraph is going.

Now, try the next example with a partner. What do you think a paragraph with this topic sentence will be about?

The pumpkin patch and hayride are two fun activities at Waimanalo Country Farms.
The pumpkin patch and hayride are two fun activities at Waimanalo Country Farms.

The paragraph might be about...

- activities at Waimanalo Country farms
- the pumpkin patch and hayride
- why Waimanalo Country Farms was fun.