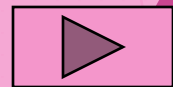


paragraph

The Essential Parts in Paragraphs

- ❑ Topics
- ❑ Main Ideas
- ❑ Supporting Details

Next slide



Topic

1. It is the big idea of the paragraph
2. It is what the paragraph is about
3. Usually it is the most frequently mentioned in the paragraph
4. In the form of noun or noun phrase

What is the Topic of the Following Paragraph?

Does watching violence on TV make people more prone to violence themselves? Obviously, TV violence has some negative effects. One study found that heavy TV watchers are more fearful of others. They try to protect themselves with guns, alarm systems, and security locks on doors. In the same study it was found that heavy TV watchers are less upset about real-life violence than are non-TV watchers. All of the violence they see on TV makes them less sensitive to the real thing. A recent study also found that TV violence increases aggressive behavior in kids and makes them more likely to select toy guns rather than other kinds of toys.

Main Idea

- ❑ Also called controlling idea, central thought, or gist
- ❑ Called a thesis when referring to a passage or long selection
- ❑ Usually stated, but may be implied
- ❑ When stated in a sentence by, the main idea is expressed in the topic sentence.

Topic Sentences

- ❑ The most common place to find or state main idea (topic sentence) in non-fiction material is in the first sentence of a paragraph.
- ❑ The second most common place for a stated main idea is in the last sentence of a non-fiction paragraph.
- ❑ A topic sentence is a general or summary statement.
- ❑ A brief statement that ends in a plural noun may be used as a topic sentence

Keep in Mind

- ❑ The topic sentence must include the topic within it.
- ❑ A topic sentence must NOT include details; it is a general sentence.
- ❑ A topic sentence must NOT contain transitions (terms like “for instance,” “second,” “in addition”) which suggest examples.
- ❑ A topic sentence may end in a plural noun or contain a plural noun that is a general term for the supporting details.
- ❑ A sentence that is followed by a statement with a contrast term is NOT the topic sentence.

Which of the following could be good topic sentences?

- A. Students go to college for many reasons.
- B. Twenty-five students reported having their books stolen last semester.
- C. For smokers and their families, smoking has many negative health effects.
- D. You can protect your home from burglary by taking several precautions.
- E. The second way to improve your grades is to take extensive lecture notes.
- F. There are several steps you should take before putting your home on the market.

Sample Paragraph Topic Sentence

1)The high cost of college causes many problems for students today. 2) For one thing, it keeps some students from attending college in the first place. 3) Also, high tuitions affect the amount of time available for study. 4) Because loans and scholarships are not easy to get, many students have to put in numerous hours at work in order to afford an education. 5) Finally, those who do manage to get loans know they must begin their careers with large debts.

Practice with Finding a Stated Main Idea (Topic Sentence)

¹Cocaine is considered today to be both a major social and medical problem. ²Just a century ago, however, cocaine was treated as a harmless stimulant and cure-all. ³Scientists, such as Sigmund Freud, freely used cocaine. ⁴Coca Cola's original formula actually included three parts coca leaves (the source of cocaine) to one part cola nut. ⁵Coca Cola was originally advertised as a delicious drink as well as a medicine to "cure all nervous afflictions." ⁶It was often prescribed for headaches, depression, and many other ills.

Implied Main Idea

- ❑ The main idea is not stated in a topic sentence
- ❑ It is reflected in all sentences in the paragraph
- ❑ It is the general idea that unite all the sentences

Remember! The main idea should

- 1) be a complete sentence,
- 2) include the topic of the paragraph, and
- 3) avoid specific details.

Practicing Implied Main Ideas

¹College students must attend classes for several hours each day. ²When in class, they must listen carefully to their professors and take careful notes. ³In addition, students must spend many hours reading difficult textbooks that deal with many varied subjects. ⁴Furthermore, college students must take a few hours daily to complete homework assignments and to prepare for regular exams. ⁵Besides all this, they must frequently do research papers and write essays.

The best statement of the implied main idea for the previous paragraph is:

1. Taking notes is a difficult task for many students.
2. College students have to do a lot of homework.
3. Tests and research are very important requirements for college students.
4. College students must spend much time doing everything that is required of them.