

Find the topic sentence in each paragraph. Circle the topic and underline the controlling idea.

PARAGRAPH 1**Libraries**

Libraries offer people a wide variety of activities. Reading, of course, is one of the main activities. People browse the shelves to find interesting books to borrow, and they also come to read newspapers and magazines. Using computers is another popular activity. People can read articles online or do research. They can also check their email, shop, or contact their friends on social networking sites. Studying is also a popular activity. Many students come to the library after school to do their homework or study for tests. Some libraries even have areas where students can study together and talk quietly. Indeed, libraries are for much more than simply reading books.

PARAGRAPH 2**Libraries**

Libraries are busy from morning until night in my city. In the morning, you can find retired people and others who aren't working. Some come to borrow books, read newspapers and magazines, and use the computers. Others bring their preschool children in order to read to them or to take part in story hours. In the afternoon, students come to the library. They use the computers, do their homework, or work together on assignments. In the evening, the library is also quite busy. People come to relax after work, and families often visit after dinner. In short, people use libraries all day long for a variety of reasons.



PARAGRAPH 3

Libraries

A good place to volunteer in your community is a library. First, libraries use volunteers to sort and put books back on the shelves. You can learn how to do this with only a few hours of training. Second, some libraries use volunteers to help people use the computers. You can help people learn how to find information and send emails. In addition, libraries often use volunteers to help out in the children's area. You can lead story hours or help children with special art and reading projects. Finally, libraries use volunteers as tutors. For example, you can volunteer to help students with their homework or become a conversation partner for someone learning English. To sum up, libraries welcome many different kinds of volunteers.

PARAGRAPH 4

Libraries

Over the past 20 years, many changes have taken place in libraries. First of all, libraries now have computers for people to use. Usually, there is no charge to use the computer for research or for surfing online. Second, there are fewer records, cassette tapes, and video tapes. These have been replaced by CDs and DVDs. In addition, many libraries now have a kiosk where you can check out your books using a computer. Finally, libraries have become more social and community-oriented than they were in the past. They are now places where people come to discuss ideas, learn a craft, study with friends, or join a community group. As our world changes and technology improves, libraries continue to change to meet the needs of the people who use them.

PRACTICE 5**Choosing Topic Sentences**

- A** Read the paragraphs. Circle the letter of the best topic sentence for each one and write it on the line.

PARAGRAPH 1

_____ *Living in a foreign country has a number of benefits.*

_____ First, living in a foreign country helps you learn another language faster than studying it at school. Second, you can learn directly about the history, geography, and culture of a country. Third, you become especially knowledgeable about different cultures and different ways of living. Fourth, living in a foreign country makes you appreciate your own country more.

- a. Living in a foreign country helps you learn.
- b. Everyone should live in a foreign country for a while.
- c. Living in a foreign country has a number of benefits.

PARAGRAPH 2

_____ Some colleges and universities in the United States are private. Private colleges and universities do not get money from taxes, so they are usually more expensive. Other colleges and universities are public; that is, the citizens of each state pay some of the costs through their taxes. As a result, public colleges are cheaper for students to attend. No matter which type of college you attend—public or private—you can get a good education.

- a. There are two main types of colleges and universities in the United States.
- b. Public colleges and universities get money from taxes.
- c. There are many colleges and universities in the United States.

PARAGRAPH 3

_____ One reason for choosing a small college is that classes are small. The average class in a small college is 20 students. Another reason is that it is fairly easy to meet with professors. Professors in small colleges have time to help students and are usually happy to do so. In addition, small colleges are friendly, so new students make friends quickly. For these three reasons, small colleges are better than large universities for many students.

- a. Small colleges are friendlier than large universities.
- b. There are several reasons for attending a small college instead of a large university.
- c. You can get an excellent education at a small college.

PARAGRAPH 4

_____ First of all, employers want workers to be dependable. That is, they want workers who come to work every day. Second, employers want workers who are quite responsible. Can the boss give the worker a project to do and know that it will be done well? Third, employers look for workers who can work well with others. The ability to get along with coworkers is extremely important to the success of a business. To summarize, employers look for dependable, responsible team players.

- a. It is difficult to find good employees these days.
- b. Employers read job applications very carefully.
- c. Employers look for three main qualities in their employees.

- B** Read the paragraphs. Then write a topic sentence for each one.

PARAGRAPH 1

Colleges and universities in the United States offer several different types of degrees. An associate's degree is given for a two-year program of study. Most students at a community college earn an associate's degree. Students at a four-year college or university earn an undergraduate degree, also called a bachelor of arts (BA) or bachelor of science (BS). Some students continue their studies by doing postgraduate work at a university. After several years, they can receive a graduate degree, such as a master's degree (MA) or a doctorate (Ph.D., doctor in philosophy). In short, there are several types of college degrees in the United States.

PARAGRAPH 2

_____ First, good teachers know their subject extremely well. That is, a math teacher has advanced education in mathematics, and an English teacher knows a lot about English grammar. Second, good teachers are especially good communicators. This means they know how to present information in ways that students can understand. Third, good teachers are enthusiastic. That is, they can show students that they are interested in their subject and that the subject is quite fun to learn about. To summarize, good teachers have expert knowledge, good communication skills, and enthusiasm for their subject.

_____ The first type of shopper doesn't like to waste time. She knows what she wants to buy and how much she wants to pay. If the store has what she wants, she buys it and leaves. She is a good kind of customer because she doesn't take too much of a salesperson's time. A second type of shopper comes into a store with a general idea of what she wants, listens to the salesperson's suggestions, looks at a few items, and makes a decision. She is also a good kind of customer. A third kind of shopper has no idea what she wants. She spends two hours trying to decide which item to buy. She takes up a lot of a salesperson's time and sometimes doesn't buy anything. In conclusion, the first two types of shoppers are a salesperson's dream, but the third type is a salesperson's nightmare.

SUPPORTING SENTENCES

Supporting sentences follow the topic sentence in a paragraph. Supporting sentences explain or prove the ideas in the topic sentence. They are the "filling" in a paragraph "sandwich." The supporting sentences are the biggest part of a paragraph, just as the filling is the biggest part of a sandwich.

SUPPORTING SENTENCES

