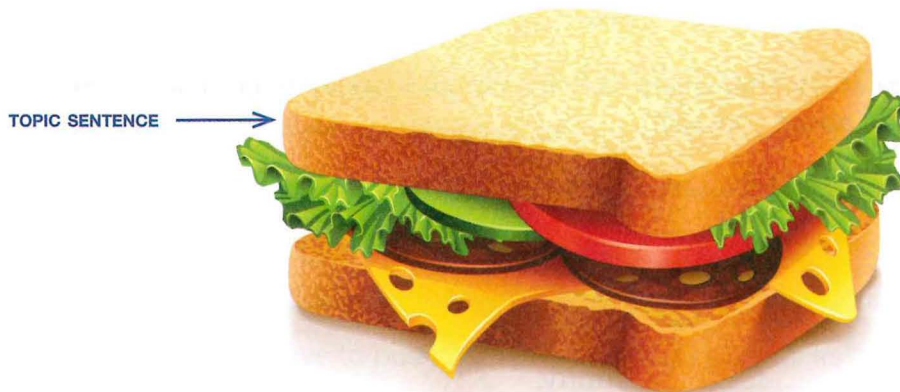


ORGANIZATION

In Chapter 1, you learned that a paragraph has three parts: a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence. Now you will study each part of a paragraph in more detail.

THE TOPIC SENTENCE

The most important sentence in a paragraph is the **topic sentence**. It is called the topic sentence because it tells readers what the main idea of the paragraph is. In other words, it tells readers what they are going to read about. The topic sentence is usually the first sentence in a paragraph. It is the top piece of bread in our paragraph “sandwich.”



A topic sentence has two parts: 1) a **topic**, which tells what the paragraph will be about, and 2) a **controlling idea**, which tells what the paragraph will say about the topic. It tells the reader: This paragraph will discuss these things—and only these things—about this topic.

For example, the topic of the writing model on page 38 is *good flight attendants*. What will the paragraph say about good flight attendants? The controlling idea tells us: *They have three important characteristics*. The paragraph will not talk about their uniforms, their training, or their duties. It will only discuss three important characteristics that good flight attendants have.

Here are examples of topic sentences about English:

English is constantly adding new words.

English borrows words from other languages.

English is necessary for many different jobs.

Note that the topic in each of these examples is the same (*English*), but the controlling ideas are different. That means that each paragraph will discuss something very different about English.

In the topic sentence, the topic can come before or after the controlling idea:

BEFORE: ^{TOPIC} English ^{CONTROLLING IDEA} borrows words from other languages.

AFTER: ^{CONTROLLING IDEA} Other languages give words to ^{TOPIC} English.

BEFORE: ^{TOPIC} English ^{CONTROLLING IDEA} is necessary for many different jobs.

AFTER: ^{CONTROLLING IDEA} Many different jobs require ^{TOPIC} English.

PRACTICE 3 Analyzing Topic Sentences

Look at each group of topic sentences. Circle the topic and underline the controlling idea of each sentence. (You will use these groups of sentences again later.)

GROUP 1

1. Good roommates have four characteristics.
2. College students face many challenges.
3. Living with your parents has certain advantages.
4. Successful student athletes have several characteristics.
5. Small colleges are better than big universities for several reasons.

GROUP 2

1. Successful managers share several characteristics.
2. New teachers must master several skills.
3. Living with your parents has certain disadvantages.
4. Good test-takers share several characteristics.
5. Big universities are better than small ones for three reasons.