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Step 5 - Topic Sentence & Paragraph

The first sentence of a paragraph is usually the topic sentence. It tells the reader two things: (1) **The topic.** (2) **The main point - What you are going to say about the topic.** Look at the following examples and try the exercises. Readers like to know what they are going to read about.

(1) **summer** (2) **how wonderful**

I had a wonderful summer. I started sleeping late every day. When I got up, I went shopping with my friends. I stayed up late at night watching TV. In August, I went camping for a week. I wish I were still on holiday!

The other sentences in the paragraph should all support or explain the details of the topic.

(1) **campus** (2) **how big**

My university campus is very big. There are so many buildings it is hard to find your way around. It also has another part at the other side of town, so you have to catch a bus to get there. It took me three weeks to get used to it, but I am beginning to find my way around now.

Try these exercises.

The city park is a beautiful place. The cherry blossoms in the spring are a joy to see. There are some beautiful flowers. Sometimes I go swimming. It is surprising how few people go there. It is a great place to go for a walk or just relax and get some peace.

1) Which sentence does not explain the topic? _____

Choose the best topic sentence for the paragraphs.

2) The food is great in Okinawa.
Okinawa is a nice place to take a vacation.
The sea is very blue in Okinawa.

_____ The beaches are fantastic with soft white sand, and the sea is deep blue. There are many fine restaurants in Okinawa, and the food is really fresh.

3) Shopping is not easy.
The stores are crowded at Christmas.
It is better to do your Christmas shopping early.

_____ It will be difficult for you if you do your shopping late at Christmas. Many stores sell out of the more popular items so it will be difficult for you to find what you want. The stores are also more crowded, and the lines are much longer.

Now write a topic sentence for these paragraphs.

4) _____ I get up very early to get to school on time. I have five classes a day with only fifty minutes for lunch. My last class finishes at six o'clock. Then, I go to work at a coffee shop until nine-thirty. I get home very late, take a bath and go to bed. The next day, it all begins again.

5) _____ He has collected manga and baseball cards ever since he was a child. He also enjoys painting and drawing. Recently he has started gardening. Paul's favorite hobby is reading, and he tries to read at least one book every week.

6) _____ The work is very interesting. I learn new things every day, and I get to travel a lot. My boss is very kind and helpful if I have a problem. I have also made many new friends at my new job.

7) _____ They are knee-length and made of leather. The fur lining is very warm and comfortable. I wore them all through the winter and my feet were never cold or wet.

Write a short paragraph for each topic sentence.

8) My house is very cold in the winter. _____

9) It is great to have a dog as a pet. _____

10) I love McDonald's burgers. _____

If you are still having a problem with topic sentences, try this. Think of one word to describe your story, and put it in the topic sentence.

- ✓ I had a wonderful summer.
- ✓ My university campus is very big.
- ✓ The city park is a beautiful place.
- ✓ My journey to work is really awful.

These are not good because they only have the topic. You need to tell the reader what you will say about the topic. Try not to use the word introduce. It is a topic sentence, so we know you are introducing.

- ✗ I will introduce my summer.
- ✗ I will tell you about my campus.
- ✗ Here I will talk about the city park.
- ✗ This is about my journey to work.