

Topic sentence

Disneyland was a great place for our family holiday.

topic + controlling idea

Writing focus: Topic sentences

A good topic sentence should include either of the following:

- one clear topic
weak: *It's important to have friends, and also to do well in school.*
strong: *I don't think I will ever have a better friend than Heather.*
- an opinion or idea about the topic
weak: *I have been studying karate.*
strong: *Studying karate has given me strength and self-confidence.*

A good topic sentence should **not** be:

- too *broad* (too much to write about)
weak: *Australia is an interesting country.*
strong: *On my visit to Australia, I saw many unusual animals.*
- too *narrow* (not enough to write about / is just a fact)
weak: *School starts at 8.30 a.m.*
strong: *Getting ready for school in the morning is more difficult than any of my classes.*

Remember

The topic sentence is usually the first or last sentence, but it can be any sentence in the paragraph.

The next slide contains some examples of topic sentences.

Decide which ones are correct and then check yourself.

In the following pairs, circle the number of the best topic sentence. Then explain your choice to a partner. Say why the sentence you didn't choose is weak. Use one or more of these reasons:

- It's too broad.
- It's too narrow.
- There is no main idea or opinion.
- There is more than one main idea.

Keys

a. 1. Many people in England and the United States have cats.

2. Cats are good company for their owners.

There is no strong opinion or idea about the topic; it is too broad......

b. 1. Studying English at secondary school helps you get a better job.

2. We study English at secondary school.

c. 1. The food and people in Japan, Taiwan, and Korea are very interesting and different,
and so are the buildings.

2. Traditional Japanese food is different from Korean food.

d. 1. My grandfather has helped me in many ways.

2. My grandfather is 86 years old.

e. 1. I really like sports.

2. Rugby has taught me many things about life.

f. 1. There are many environmental problems around the world.

2. It's important to save the rainforests in South America.

g. 1. I got an A on my last maths test.

2. I have a secret technique for learning maths.