

Connecting Topic Sentences & Thesis Statements

Center for Excellence in Writing & Communication

Our Ideas In Writing

When writing in any genre, it is essential that the writer makes it very clear what their overall message/argument is throughout the entire piece. One way in which we do this as writers is by having a **strong central thesis statement** and **related supporting topic sentences**. It is crucial that these topic sentences are specific and purposeful in supporting your thesis— and, in order to have our writing be as clear as possible, our topic sentences must be connected to our thesis.



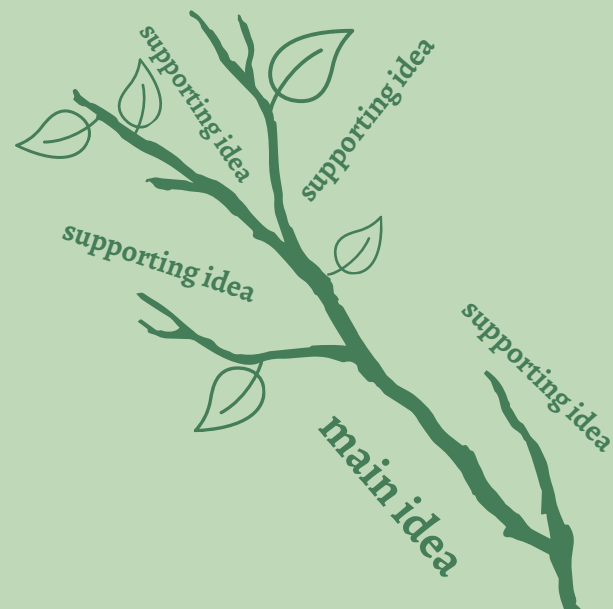
Branching Out From the Main Idea

Just like the branches on this tree are all connected to the central *trunk* of the tree, so too our topic sentences must be connected to the central thesis of our writing. The branches of a tree stem *outward* from the tree's trunk into their own singular unit. While each branch is individual, they all connect to the trunk and are therefore all part of the same tree— they may serve different purposes, but they all support the tree's life and growth.



The Purpose of Topic Sentences

Our topic sentences act as their own singular units to guide our readers into our body paragraphs. Each topic sentence is individual, and should be able to stand alone clearly, but it will also always be connected to the overall thesis in your writing. Our topic sentences each serve different purposes by providing distinct and specific singular points in their own respective paragraph, but they all ultimately support our writing and the main message we want to convey.



Parts of a Topic Sentence

A topic sentence is one part— just one element— of our thesis statement. Our thesis statement, then, should be present or emphasized within our topic sentence in order to show relevance and cohesion throughout our paper. A topic sentence consists of:

Reference to thesis + one specific idea for paragraph

(order doesn't matter, but we must be specific & focus on *only one idea!*)

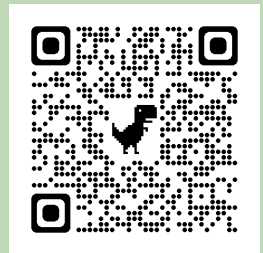
Crafting a Topic Sentence

Now, let's look more closely at how we can make strong connections between our thesis and topic sentences, as well as between our topic sentences.

When composing a topic sentence, consider the following questions:

1. What is the one thing I want the reader to learn in this paragraph?
2. How will this one lesson support my overall thesis?
3. Why are the two related/connected?

Make an appointment



Transitioning Paragraphs (Making It All Connect)

Start with the topic itself.

- Is this topic relevant to the thesis?
- Is this topic distinctly different from other topics you've already discussed?
- Is this topic singular?
- Will it only focus on one idea/subject?
- Will this topic help you further describe and argue for your overall message more clearly?

Next, begin to dissect the topic.

- How will my topic and the ideas I explore with it help my reader along my argument?
- Why are these two topics related?
- In your topic sentence, make sure there is a specific and clear reason as to how the supporting point relates to the thesis. This means you will probably use "because" or another transitional phrase between your claim and reasoning.

Do not worry too much about transition sentences from one paragraph to the next. You will have a natural transition between your topics by relating each topic to the thesis. Just like tree branches have common ground with the tree's trunk, your topic sentences have natural common ground with your thesis. By referencing your thesis in each topic sentence to show connection, you will naturally and seamlessly transition from one paragraph to the next.