

# **Unit 4**

## **PART THREE WRITING**

**Section A: Writing Strategy (3):**

**How to Write Topic Sentences (P56-59)**

# What is the structure of a paragraph?

- **A paragraph is composed of**
  - **A topic sentence**
  - **Supporting sentences/details**
  - **Concluding sentence**

This is *the structure* of a paragraph!

Generally speaking, these *three different types of sentences* play different roles in a paragraph:

a sentence to tell the reader what the paragraph is mainly about.

1. Topic sentence; (主题句)

2. Supporting sentences; (扩展句/阐述句)

3. Concluding sentence. (结论句/结尾句)

a sentence to end a paragraph or to summarize the ideas.

sentences to give more detailed information about the topic sentence.

# 1. The definition of a topic sentence

A topic sentence states **the main point** of a paragraph: it is **the controlling and central idea** of the paragraph and at the same time, serves as a **mini-thesis** for it.

signpost / headline

provide a sketch

- **Functions of a good topic sentence**

- to **readers**: avoid confusion, guide the readers to the argument

- to **writers**: improve the essay, recognize the weaknesses in the argument

- keep the both the author and the readers on track

## **2. The **characteristics** of well-written topic sentences**

# The Characteristics

1) Including a subject and a controlling idea

A topic sentence comes in 2 parts:

- ◆ **subject** to be discussed
- ◆ **the idea or attitude** about the subject  
(=**the controlling idea**)

e.g.

*The city has a fascinating mixture of European and Asian traditions.*    the subject--- “the city”

the controlling idea--- “has a fascinating mixture of European and Asian traditions”

*The Topic Sentence* = *subject* +  
*Controlling Idea*

# The Characteristics

2) Being **limited enough** to be developed in one paragraph

The topic sentence should be **neither too general nor too specific.**

too broad---you can't support it adequately in a single paragraph

too narrow---it doesn't require any support

Example---P57



# The Characteristics

## 3) Lending itself to development

The controlling idea must be able to be **amplified or illustrated**.

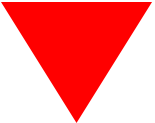

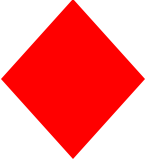
If it is **too factual**, it'll leave no room for development.

e.g.

Huangshan is in Anhui Province.

**A better version:** Huangshan in Anhui Province is noted for its breathtaking views.

### 3. The position of a topic sentence

<b>type</b>	<b>The position of the <b>topic sentence</b></b>
	<b>At the beginning of a paragraph</b>
	<b>At the end of a paragraph</b>
	<b>In the middle of a paragraph</b>

## **4. The way to come up with a topic sentence**

- What will happen in a paragraph?
- What information will you include?
- Why is the paragraph important in the context of your argument?
- What points are you trying to make?

# Tips

1. Relating your topic sentence to your thesis can help strengthen the coherence of your essay.

2. to establish a connection between a paragraph and your thesis to show how a paragraph contributes to the development of your argument

3. If your topic sentences merely restate your thesis, this paragraph or this sentence turns out to be redundant.

If several of your topic sentences restate your thesis, your essay is probably repetitive, even if you use different words.

## Part Three Writing

### Section B

- 1) **Directions:** *The following sentences are not appropriate for topic sentences. Can you figure out why they are inappropriate?*

**1. My hometown is famous because it is located by Yangtze River, which is very wide, and because it is built near an unusually steep hill called Baiyun Hill.**

**• Answers:**

**It's so specific, or narrow that it leaves little or no room for further development. And it doesn't require any support.**

**2. There are two reasons why some people like to buy cars with automatic transmission and two reasons why others like cars with manual transmission.**

- **Answers:**

**It is too broad, so you cannot support it adequately in a single paragraph, it should be a little specific to limit the subject to one aspect that can be covered adequately in a paragraph.**

**3. I have a friend named Allen.**

- **Answers:**

**It is too broad. And it lacks a controlling idea. A good topic sentence should first introduce the subject of the paragraph. And it states an idea or an attitude about the subject.**



**2) Directions:** *Study the following topics. Make a list of things that come to mind and write a topic sentence that has a controlling idea. Remember to focus your controlling idea on one aspect of the topic.*

## **(1) Surfing on the Internet**

- **Answer:**

**We may think of : its advantages, disadvantages, convenience, ...**

- **And the topic sentence may be: Too much surfing on the Internet can make the college students' campus-life colorless.**

## **(2) Job interview**

**Answer: We may think of : challenge, preparation, ...**

- And the topic sentence may be: A good preparation may be the biggest factor that will ensure you a successful job interview.**

### **(3) Cooperation**

**Answer:**

**We may think of: team cooperation,  
success, ...**

- **And the topic sentence may be:  
Cooperation ability decides how far away  
you can go in your career life.**

**3) Directions:** *Here are some topic sentences, and try to judge whether they are proper or not. If not, please modify the topic sentences to make them clear and definite.*

**1. I love Alice.**

**Answers:**

**The reason why I love Alice is her attitude towards me.**

**2. Mr. Smith is my new colleague.**

**Answers:**

**Mr. Smith, who is my new colleague, has performed well in his new job.**

**3. The busiest season is the summer.**

**Answers:**

**The busiest season for farmers is the summer.**

**4. Music is very important.**

**Answers:**

**Music is important in our daily life.**



**5. Students should read books.**

**Answers:**

**There are many advantages for students to read books.**