

Writing Supporting Sentences

There are common mistakes made by a writer when they write a paragraph. The mistakes are:

1. There are irrelevant sentences.
2. Supporting sentences are not related to topic sentence.
3. Supporting sentences are too general.
4. A paragraph only consists of supporting sentences without topic sentence.

I. Irrelevant sentences

Read the following paragraph!

Storm in North Miami caused many buildings ruined. At least 50 houses lost their roof. Fifteen houses were totally damaged. Two public schools were broken. Local government predicts that it needs much money and takes a long time to recover those damages.

The last sentence does not have anything to do with the ruined buildings. In fact, it creates a new focus i.e. local government prediction of total damages. It does not mention the ruined buildings. Therefore, the last is irrelevant sentence.

II. Supporting sentences which are not related to the topic sentence.

Music produces many products like cassette, CD, MP3, MP4, etc. These products have advantages and disadvantages. A cassette costs from Rp 17.500 to Rp 25.000 and a CD costs at least Rp 45.000. MP3 and MP4 are much more expensive than CD and cassette, for about Rp 150.000-Rp300.000.

The second sentence is the topic sentence. The controlling ideas are advantages and disadvantages. In contrary, the supporting sentences do not mention the advantages and disadvantages of the products, but they compare the cost of CD's, cassettes, MP3 and MP4.

Dangdut is very popular in my country. I have 40 CD's in my disc rack. I always play 3-6 CD's every night before I go to bed or when I study. In this month, I am planning to attend Dangdut concert in Jogjakarta. I wish I could take some pictures of my favorite singers.

The supporting sentences in the paragraph above do not explain how Dangdut becomes popular in writer's country. They talk about the writer's interest of Dangdut. They explain how many collections she/he has, his/her habit, and his/her plan.

III. General supporting sentence

The repairs on my car were much more expensive than I had anticipated. I think I was overcharged for everything. I never imagined that the final bill would be so high. I had to borrow some money from my friend to pay it.

The paragraph above has a good topic sentence but the supporting sentences are too general, e.g the second and the third sentence. Those sentences can be specified. For example, those sentences can be replaced by “I had to pay \$395 to get the brakes repaired and another \$100 to get the wheel aligned. The engine oil change was \$30, and the replacement of the air filter was another \$20.” These sentences indicate that the bill was so high or very expensive.

IV. A paragraph without topic sentence

Thailand has miles of empty beaches. They are beautiful, clean, and crowded, even in summer. You can spend the whole afternoon on a beach and not see another person. In Japan, on the other hand, the beaches are very crowded. You can hardly find a place to sit down at the more popular Japanese beaches. The beaches in Northern differ in another way. The water is so cold, so most people go to the beach only to sunbathe. Along the French Riviera, the beaches are rocky, not sandy as they are on tropical islands. Each type of beach – empty or crowded, sandy or rocky – has its own special qualities to enjoy

If you take a look closely at the paragraph, the paragraph talks about the beaches in Thailand, Japan, Northern, and French Riviera. It does not have a topic sentence which can generalize those supporting sentences.

PRACTICE WRITING SUPPORTING SENTENCES

1. I love eating food from different countries.
 - I go to Hoka-Hoka Bento twice a month and my favorite menu is Ebi Katsu.
 - Every weekend when my sister visits me, I order Pizza.
 - When I pick up my brother from his school, I often buy Kebab which is near from his school.
2. There are several ways to conserve electricity.
3. It is almost impossible to study in my dormitory.